

JOHN PETERS

I

GREENE

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JOHN PETERS,

A NOVEL,

By AELLA GREENE,

**AUTHOR OF "WHERE THE NOBLE HAVE THEIR COUNTRY,"
"STANZA AND SEQUEL" AND OTHER POEMS.**



PUBLISHED IN 1891.

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AELLA GREENE.

CLARK W. BRYAN & COMPANY,
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SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

WITH
LOVING AND UNFADING MEMORIES OF

I. L. G.,

TO WHOM THE INCIDENTS AND EVENTS OF THIS NOVEL WERE
NARRATED BEFORE HER JOURNEY TO THE REST AND
THE RADIANCE OF THE HILLS OF THE OTHER
COUNTRY, THE WORK IS DEDICATED TO

MY FRIENDS

IN AND OUT OF THEIR NATIVE NEW ENGLAND AND MINE—
THE NEW ENGLAND WHEREIN ARE LAID MOST
OF THE SCENES OF THE STORY OF

“JOHN PETERS.”

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JOHN PETERS.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH MR. AND MRS. DANIEL SMITH TRACE THE RESULTS OF A PLEASANT EVENT IN THEIR HISTORY.

OF a June morning early in "the fifties," Daniel Smith came into his house, near the Cross-roads neighborhood of Dayville, exclaiming, as he took off his hat—not keeping it on, as was the custom of many men in that region—"I do declare, Lizzie, when I gave up my will and yielded to your wishes, and let you have a piece of the garden for morning-glories, marigolds and sweet-williams, I did one of the best acts of my life. Posies don't bring in money, but they, or somethin' else, have brought me all these years the best kind o' cookin', the tidiest kind o' housekeepin', and real words o' love. And I remember, 'twas on that day I had the worst kind o' a piece of turf land to 'break up'—greensward, some folks call it; but that ain't right, is it, dear?"

"No; greensward is the word," replied his wife.

"And those who say greensward want to put on airs and can't?"

"That is it, dear."

"Well, that day I broke up the turf land, and had for a

team nothin' but a pair o' wild-like steers, and the land was full o' rocks. But, somehow or other, I got along well; the steers wa'n't half so fractious as I thought they'd be; and then I kept my patience through all the spring work, and, come hayin' time, they acted as stiddy as old oxen. And at cattle-show, over to Wayfil', the next fall, they took the first premium for 'trained steers.' Now my givin' up to your notions was good, because 'twas givin' up my selfishness and—what's the word I want, wife?"

"Opinionativeness, perhaps."

"Yes, and adopting—what?"

"My sentiment?"

"Yes, that's it; sentiment, sentiment," reiterated Farmer Smith. "And sentiment is the best payin' crop on my farm. And the best money 't intrist that anybody's got in this town is the few coppers—twenty-five cents, wa'n't it, wife?—that I paid for those flower seeds." And he seconded his remarks by going across the room to where the wife was sitting by the cradle and kissing her with such emphasis that the explosion awoke the sleeper she had been rocking; and he looked up with a smile, and soon threw up his hands and crowed in baby glee, as if he had heard and understood the conversation and delighted in it.

"Yes," said the young mother, laying her hand tenderly on her husband's arm. "And do you remember that it was soon after the day of which you speak that our own bright-eyed Agnes was born, of whom you are justly proud—the little girl who so much resembles her father?"

and who, like him, acts unselfishly, as he then began to act? and who loves him with a passionate fondness that will be, I believe, and I certainly hope, as lasting as life itself? It will carry her, if such ordeal comes, through great toil, self-denial and suffering for her father's sake. She loves you now, and will love you always, because I loved you then. And had you not given me the favor I asked, and which at the first, as you may recall, you felt disinclined to grant, might not my poor heart have rebelled and begun hating you? Then that child would have hated you always, instead of loving you, as now she does, and always will! And just as likely as not she would have been excessively fond of flowers and have cared for nothing else; whereas, now, she has only a natural love for flowers and other beautiful things, and is beginning, although but seven years old, to take to books. She knew the alphabet at three and could read short words last fall; and this winter, though she could not go to school through the snow, she learned at home; and now, the first term at school, Miss Sampson says she has no brighter pupil among the whole thirty boys and girls. And I shouldn't wonder if our boy were equal to his sister in liking for learning. And he, too, loves you, and for much the same reason that animates his sister—because I loved you before he came to us."

Thus did that wife who was once, and ever after, believed in and allowed to have her way about flowers,—thus, on that bright morning, did she discourse to the manly

man at her side and tell truths of the most tremendous importance, truths the heeding of which would be one of the best possible helps of the world of humanity.

And well might Farmer Smith, as he gave his helpmeet another kiss, inquire, "Where did you learn all this?" Then came the climax of his approval and delight, "True as preachin'—true as preachin'! An' Daniel Smith's the happiest man alive! His wife hasn't even tried to dictate him sence he let her have those flowers. She hardly ever asks him for a new dress, and I declare if he didn't come the nighest to scoldin' he ever did, to get her to say she would have a new dress the same time he was to have a new coat! And all for those flowers! And it cost me givin' up my poor, miserabul will and payin' the whole sum of two 'York shillins' for the seeds! And I thought when I begun this talk 't I'd give you a half-dollar more for flower seeds and make the flower beds bigger, but I'll double it, and here's a whole dollar."

"No, please, husband; I have saved seeds enough to plant in the extra place you want to have given up to flowers. But if you choose, I'll take the dollar and put it in the savings bank over at Wayfield for Agnes. You know your sister gave her a dollar a year ago, which we put away for her then, and this will make two."

"Yes, dear," said the good man at her side. Then turning his gaze towards the cradle with evident delight in the little one, and taking from his pocket another silver dollar he said, "Here, wife, put this away for the little

man. I will wear the old stockins that I was goin' to throw away when I bought some new ones. I know you are handy at darnin', and I'll make the old ones do. I do want to pay off that last hundred dollars of the mortgage on the place, but I shall work all the better for a little sacrifice, and I guess Squire Williams'll wait a while longer, though the money's due soon."

"Yes," said his wife, "and I don't know how we shall come out. But, 'according to your faith, so be it unto you;' and now, come, dear; breakfast is ready, and let us eat it." And tenderly taking the little boy from the cradle, and with her mother's heart rich with joy exclaiming, "Papa's little man;" she seated him in his father's lap at the table, and going to the door she called "Agnes!" at which the child came bounding along the garden walk, her cheeks glowing from exercise in the morning air.

Seating herself opposite her husband and drawing Agnes to her side, the two folded their hands reverently while the father "gave thanks" with more than usual earnestness—and saying grace never was with him a mere formal ceremony. There is an old proverb which runs, "Hunger is the best sauce," but there's a relish a thousand-fold better than that, as the Smiths of Dayville well knew.

"Papa Thmith," said the child by her mother, "it theems to me I never thaw thu feeling tho good." There was no answer, but something the farmer did not strive to conceal slid from his eyes. And perhaps ministrants from

the other world were not looking on, and perhaps they were. At any rate, the good woman of the household, who, by the way, was not of the Wesleyan faith, but occasionally made use of a stanza or two of the Wesleyan hymns in lulling her little ones, began humming—

“Angels now are hovering round us,
Unperceived they mix the throng,
Wondering at the love that crowns us,
Glad to join the happy song.”

Farmer Smith had risen from his chair, and placing the baby in the cradle, started across the room to bring from the shelf by the clock an old-fashioned book with whose teachings it may be surmised he was not unfamiliar. The little girl at her mother's side looked lovingly up to eyes of tenderness, whispering, “I thutht do love that papa,” when a rap was heard at the door, and Agnes, at her mother's bidding, quickly stepped to open it.

And, with a cheery “Good morning,” Esquire Williams took Mr. Smith's hand and continued, “I thought I'd drive over 'n tell ye how I heeded my wife's advice. One day, last week, she 'n' I fell to talkin', after prayers, when I'd been askin' for blessins on the poor and needy,—fell to talkin' about that hundred dollars that's left over, on the mortgidge of mine on your place. And she said you'd been very prompt a-payin' the 'stalments, and that you'd had to work hard, and you was a-tryin' to git a livin', and you'd—forgive me, Mis' Smith, for bein' personal—you'd a mighty proper good wife and p'raps it would be doin' 's we'd be

done by 'ef we made it kind o' easy for you payin' the remainder; 'n' to tell the fact truth, I couldn't stand her pleadin' kind o' talk and I agreed to her notion—women like to have their way, ye know—and we agreed 'pon this 'rangement. Wife's had her head set on keepin' boarders this summer and we sh'll want more potatoes and things than we've got on hand, and if you've any to spare I'll buy them of you at a fair price and count it in to'rds the mort-gidge. And if you've any pork or cheese we'll find room for that, too. And I guess as potatoes are proper high over to Wayfield where there ain't but a few to be had, and as Mr. Thompson hain't one in his store up to the village, I'll pay ye a dollar a bushel for yourn."

"More 'n I ever had for a bushel of potatoes," said Smith.

"Yes, I know it, but I expect I'd have to give a dollar to Wayfield and I might as well pay my honest neighbor as Wayfield store-keepers. How many old potatoes have you left over 't you can spare and not starve yourself?"

"Well?" said Smith, looking inquiringly to his wife.

"Oh, you please determine that."

"Well, I'll go and see." And he returned saying, "I've three barrels full, and all sound. One barrel will do for us and I'll let you have two barrels, four bushels, I'll call them—though they would measure a trifle more—for four dollars."

"Yes, and cheese and pork would come to six more, and I'll indorse ten dollars on your note."

Then Farmer Smith said, "Squire, this ain't no Sunday nor 'preparatory lectur' time, nor 'season o' revival,' but, somehow I feel like prayin' and was just about to attend to that when you knocked."

There was special emphasis in Farmer Smith's voice as he read all that accumulation of promises in the thirty-seventh psalm, with its "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

As he and Esquire Williams arose from their knees, Mrs. Smith gave Agnes her hat and put a little shawl around her shoulders, and placing some cake, pie, cheese and apples in a basket, said, "Now Agnes, kiss papa and baby and start for school; it's quarter of nine already." And as the happy girl was making her rounds of pleasant "good byes" Esquire Williams said, "My horse is hitched out there and he's steady; throw on your shawl, Mis' Smith, and take a ride with your girl up to the school-house. The little man will stay with his papa for a few minutes; and it's too bad to make the child hurry to school. Besides, it's partly my fault that she is late, for I kept you from prayers so long. If you ride up she'll not have to be tardy."

And mother and child drove through the sweet morning air that was filled with bird-songs and the odor of apple blossoms, to the school-house at the Cross-roads, the little girl exclaiming with delight at the brook that purled over the pebbles at the roadside. There was a pleasant word or two from Miss Sampson to the mother concerning the

girl; the latter gave her mother a kiss and Mrs. Smith drove back. There were two barrels of potatoes standing outside the hatchway door, and near them was her husband, his eyes filled with tears and holding a paper in his hand. He sprang to the gate and assisted his wife from the wagon, and walking with her to where Esquire Williams was standing, exclaimed as he unfolded the paper:

"Just see here! The Squire has done ten times better 'n he said he'd do. He'd already been over to Wayfil' fore he come here and had that mortgage discharged and brought me the register's certificate that it's all done, and he's given me this bony-fidy warranty deed of the whole plantation, and said, after I told him that he should take a note o' hand for the balance, that he wouldn't take anything but my word o' honor. He won't have but fifty dollars anyway on the hundred and not a cent of interest, and he'll count these potatoes and things ten dollars on the fifty, and so there's only forty dollars to pay. Ain't I glad I was generous with the children when the Lord was about to give me such a blessing through one of his servants, Squire Williams! And without the help of your kind words I should never have toiled on and been prompt in payment and kept Squire Williams so good-natured to me that he would trust me thus much. Instid o' that, if I hadn't been good to you, I might have been selfish and careless towards him, and he would been the same towards me, for like produces like, somebody's said"—"In more ways than one," thought his wife, who had in her morning

talk given a far more powerful illustration of this truth,—"and he'd 'a' foreclosed and had the whole place at last. And we should have had no home and no joy. Instid o' that, all this!" And he emphasized his remark with a slap of his right hand on his knee, which must have made the blood tingle through all his strong frame. "And all this, and I the possessor of a home for one of the best women on earth and two little ones that are worth a million apiece! And all this for twenty-five cents paid for flower seeds. Here, wife, take the deed. Squire says if he should die he don't want a mortgidge or a note against his neighbor. And I hope he'll live to be a hundred."

With a few more words of details for the payment of the forty dollars in early potatoes and other farm produce, Esquire Williams was ready to start.

"And now," said he, "perhaps, Friend Smith, as I presume you have your potatoes and corn all planted, and it ain't quite time for hoein', you'd like to take a ride to town with me. I'm on the school committee this year and must visit the school up to the Cross-roads, where your little girl 'tends, and perhaps you would like to stop in, too. And more'n that, I was thinkin,' time o' March meetin', we oughter have the farmers represented on the board; and look out, Smith," continued the squire, "or I'll have you one of them next year, sure's you're born. And you might as well be breakin' in for doin' the business, you know."

"Well," replied the farmer, "don't care if I do go to

town, and would like to stop in to the school; but as for bein' school committee, I haven't the edication, though I think I know when a teacher is doin' well with the children, as that Miss Sampson is up to our deestrick."

"At our district, my dear, please," rejoined his wife.

"Yes, I really wish I could do better with words; but half the people round here say 'deestrick,' and my wife has the hardest kind of a time trying to teach me how to talk; and aint it mighty strange, Squire Williams, that right here in New England, that boasts of her edication for her people, there are so many who pay no attention to their speech, and talk helter-skelter and zig-zag like, just the same's I'd build a bresh fence round my sheep pastur, instid o' havin' their words stan' up straight like a good board fence. And I s'pose that I'm as bad 's any of 'em. Now, Squire, let me finish up my chores and slick up myself a little, and I'll go with you to town."

The squire—who, by the way, acquired the title by which he was generally addressed by being a justice of the peace, and, the village of Dayville not having a lawyer, acting as administrator on estates and giving advice to people about their property—was not only a member of the school board, as he had modestly said, but he had been for years its chairman. In fact, he *was* the board; and, to do him justice, he was, for those days, a competent official. His associates were the village merchant and the physician of the town. The farmer whom Mr. Williams proposed to "break in" drove with him to the school

house, where they spent an hour, and at eleven o'clock started towards Dayville Center, a distance of three miles by the highway, which ran at right angles from the road leading from the Smith farm-house to the school-house and to the grist mill of Samuel Taylor, who had the deserved reputation of "the honest miller of the Cross-roads." Still to the eastward from the mill, this latter road climbed with ease a hill which afforded the traveler a fine view of the surrounding country. From springs in this hill a brook sang its way towards the mill, which it had kept in merry tune for years, and then plunging down a cascade, it purled through a beechen wood and crossed the "Center road" two miles out from the school-house. And freshening meadows and pasture lands, it mingled its waters at length with the river whose source was far away to the north.

Passing a very small house, where Jim Jones lived, whose boys "worked out," as was the regulation phrase of direction of Cross-roads people in answering strangers inquiring the way to Dayville, Williams and Smith came next to the house of Widow Wilcutt, who was helpful in case of sickness, and "handy" at housework "when folks wuz in a pinch." Her husband, who was one of the "forty-niners," had died the same year in California.

"I declare," said Smith, slapping his knee in emphasis, "Squire Williams, that wife o' mine is just about the best woman in all Dayville and a dozen towns round, and she's insisted on doin' all her own work, makin' butter and

cheese included, besides takin' care o' the baby, just to save me expense. It's made me powerful oneasy to see her goin' through a big washin', an' I tell ye, Squire, I've just a mind to stop to Widow Wilcutt's and have her come down tomorrer and do up a lot of work at my house; and I'll trust to luck for the money to pay for one day at least. If I make as much in proportion out of the dollar as I did out of twenty-five cents for flower seeds, I'll be the richest and happiest man in all Dayville—worth enough to buy out the storekeeper, squire and selectmen, and they give me lots o' boot, too!"

"And you want the money? And that makes me think, perhaps, one of those calves that I saw up to your barnyard would make good veal 'about these days,' as it says in Thomas's Almanac, an' I guess my wife 'ud like a roast or two o' that. So just you kill the fatted calf, and here's a dollar, and what's due more I'll pay when the veal comes."

"Thank ye, Squire," said Smith; and so they stopped at the Wilcutt house, and "the widow" agreed to come down to Smith's in the morning, for a day's work.

The two men next fell to talking about the "state o' religion" in Dayville. Esquire Williams declared at the culmination of his remarks, "I do wish 't our minister, Mr. Barber, would just warm up a little in some of his sermons, and tell people about their need o' salvation, and th't they'd ought ter live better, or somethin' besides his circumlocutin' around 'mong all creation, from the children

of Israel in Egypt and in the Promised Land, clean down to the heathen in the 'benighted corners of the earth,' and not sayin' one word about men and women right here amongst us, and their chances o' heaven or 'tother place."

"That's just what I think, Squire. And what do you say to havin' a little Methodist preachin', say, for instance, down to the Cross-roads? You've got your say about meetin's and things in that school-house,—leastwise you an' the deestrick committeeman, Samuel Taylor, have,—and he'll be in for it. So s'pose now, if Elder John Peters comes round, we have a meetin' appinted for early candle-lightin' next Tuesday evenin'. Some one told Lizzie that he'd be along this way sometime this week, and I think to-day. Let me see, Wednesday? yes, to-day. When I get back, if you say so, I'll tell Miss Sampson to give out word to-night."

"All right, go ahead, neighbor Smith, and I'll stand by ye, and drive over to the meetin' and bring Mis' Williams, if she wants to come; and I think she will, for, to tell the truth, I think she's gettin' mighty tired o' that kind o' dry stuff that Barber gives us."

As the two neared a pretentious house, Williams whispered, "What d'ye think o' Lemuel Barnes, here, friend Smith? He's first selectman o' Dayville, and has been so for years; and I've heard him boast that he was 'elected and foreordained to be saved,' but, somehow 'or other, I can't like the man. I know he's my neighbor, and chairman of the standin' committee of the parish, and Mr.

Barber thinks a sight of him, but I can't. And again, it puzzles me to know where the money comes from to pay for all the improvements on his place and buy bank stock that makes him director and gives him such sway in town matters."

"Well, Squire, ye're right, and ——"

"Yes," whispered Williams; "but there's his hired men a-finishin' plantin'. Let's hear what they say."

"Bill Joanes, an' shure, for the loife o' me, I can't tell fwhy yer so aisy gittin' to wurrk av a mornin'. An' shure, it's an aisy time ye have, thin, Bill Joanes, bedad, an' ye do."

"I'll be gol darned, Mike Tobin, ef Bill Jones doesn't think yer more'n half right. Th' ole man an' me has an understandin'."

The two in the buggy had gone beyond hearing the completion of the colloquy between the farm-hands.

Smith called with his friend Williams at the Centre store for an errand or two, and, the latter meeting the miller asked of him the favor of carrying "our friend and neighbor back with you," adding, with a significant emphasis, "How'd it do to have a man of his fitness on the school board, eh, Mr. Taylor?"

"Just the thing, Squire; just the thing to do; and just like you to think on't."

"Well, all right then; but mum's the word till the time comes."

"Count on me for that, Squire."

When the three had left the store, Williams, lowering his voice to tones to inspire confidence and enjoin secrecy, continued :

“By the way, Neighbor Taylor, Friend Smith and I have been thinkin’ that some Methodist fire wouldn’t come amiss ‘about these days,’ to warm up the icy religious atmosphere in these parts ; and we would like to have it kindled down to the Cross-roads, next Tuesday evenin’ ; and he’ll tell you the rest of the arrangement on your way. Good-bye, Neighbor Taylor ; good-bye, Friend Smith. Be sure about askin’ Miss Sampson to tell of the meetin’ ; and look out to cover up those potatoes, for there might be a frost. I’ll be down to get ‘em to-morrer mornin’.”

When her husband and Esquire Williams left, Mrs. Smith went quietly about “tidying up things,” as her husband liked to call it, setting back the chairs without an emphasis in the sound of any post touching the floor. Then she swept the room so carefully that the dust was scarcely lifted from the floor. She pushed it along in front of the broom, wholly unlike the manner of many a driving house-keeper who is ambitious to have her house “spick-span” clean. The breakfast table was next set back quietly in its place by the wall, and the dishes were soon washed, wiped and placed away on the shelves of the buttery, where, opening a little window, the happy and busy woman quietly remarked, “How good Daniel was to make that window so that I could keep the milk and food fresh.”

Coming from the buttery to the living-room, she closed the door, that the air from the window mentioned might not come to the child in the cradle. Then, beyond the cradle she opened another window, the air from which could be admitted without endangering the health of the little one, and exclaimed as she inhaled the fresh breeze, "How fragrant the odor of those lilacs is! and how charming is all nature!"

Returning, she looked with a mother's delight at the child, who, like the good baby he was, had gone to sleep. Taking from the shelf, where she had placed it near the Bible and the clock, the document handed her by her husband, she said,

"Yes, it's all right, a deed of all this place to Daniel Smith from the squire, and there's his own signature, Theophilus Williams, that I've seen on wedding certificates; and not a claim in writing against us. Isn't Esquire Williams a good man!"

CHAPTER II.

ELDER JOHN PETERS CALLS AT THE SMITH HOMESTEAD AND
MRS. SMITH RELATES HER CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE WITH THE
QUAKERS.

MRS. Smith had just completed her soliloquy and had taken a pair of the old stockings, at the darning of which her husband thought her so "handy," when a rap led her to put aside the work and go to the door. There she saw a plainly attired man of medium height, with dark hair, an earnest face and a rich, clear voice.

"I'm Elder John Peters," said he, "the Methodist minister of Wayfield circuit. I've been holdin' meetin's in Brier Hill and other neighborhoods and the Lord smiled on us with a few bein' saved. Some one told me there was a good openin' for Methodist meetin's hereabouts and I thought you might know; in fact, I was directed to you."

"Yes; I believe one of my neighbors told me about you and said that you might be coming this way, and to-day I think was the time she mentioned. So come in, Elder Peters, and rest awhile, and, if you can wait so long, stay till Mr. Smith comes back from town, and, perhaps, he will have something to suggest which will put you in the way of accomplishing what you seek to do."

"Thank you. I'll hitch my horse under the shade of the maples across the way, so's't he'll stand easy, and I'll wait for Mr. Smith."

Thus saying, the itinerant tethered his horse in the shade, and removing the saddle-bags from the steed, carried them with him into the house and took from them a copy of the Methodist hymns and his Bible and sat down to study. But, presently, at the asking of Mrs. Smith, he related his experience as an itinerant, telling how "the Lord called him" and he heard the call and, after a great many weeks in "exercise of mind" that made him "clean a'most insane," he decided to obey and begin, at the first opening that he could find, the work of carrying to men the glad tidings of salvation for "whosoever will" be saved. This opening was soon made known to him by a "good old father" of some peculiarities, but still made of the true metal. "Perhaps," said the preacher, "you have heard of him—Billy Hibbard was his name, and he's now gone to glory."

And so the conversation ran on, until, an hour after his arrival, the itinerant said, "Begging pardon, madam, may I ask you if you think you have a personal interest in the Savior?"

"Well, I hardly know how to answer you; I think the personage to whom you refer is the noblest in history. But, concerning the nature of that being and the mission he had on earth, I am not fully decided. We might, perhaps, differ. I am interested in the efforts of honest

and intelligent people who seek to better the condition of humanity, as I have no doubt you are doing. Most certainly, sir, I wish you success in your calling."

"Thank you, Mrs. Smith; and I can tell you that, whatever they say about 'howlin' Methodists' and their harpin' on religion at all times and under all circumstances, there's one preacher of that order who at least tries to be not only fervent in spirit, but also to remember the sayin' of the Scripture, 'He that winneth souls is wise.' And one word from me now is better than a thousand."

An hour after noon Farmer Smith came home, and on entering his house exclaimed, "Well, I do declare, if this isn't just right! Mr. Peters, I believe?"

"Yes," said the itinerant, rising, "I happened along, on my rounds, and Mrs. Smith asked me to stay till you came."

"And do you know, Squire Williams and I have just been talkin' over matters, and we thought that the 'state o' religion' as they call it, hereabouts, could be improved with a little Methodist fire, and I've got his permission—he's school committee, you know—and that of the district committee, for you to have the use of the school-house up to the Cross-roads for a meetin', at early candle-light, next Tuesday, if that's convenient for you."

"Praise the Lord! if that aint all His doin's. Couldn't have hit it nearer right if I'd laid the plan myself."

"Now let's have some dinner, Elder Peters, for I see

Mrs. Smith has it ready and waitin'—just like her, she's always on time. An' then I'll go up to the school-house—this is a kind o' broken day with me, after plantin' and afore hoein'—an' I'll ask Miss Sampson, the teacher, to give out word to-day 'bout the meetin'."

After grace was said by Elder Peters, he and Farmer Smith did ample justice to the meal, the host pausing, now and then, to say, "Elder, eat hearty,—can't I help you to something more? It's all first class cookin', for my wife did it."

Miss Sampson announced to her pupils, that afternoon, the appointment for the Methodist meeting, supplementing the notice with a request to her pupils to ask their "parents and friends all to come." She further remarked, "The notice will be repeated on Monday, and I will thank Agnes if she will remind me of it."

On his return from the school-house the farmer remarked, "Elder Peters, it's gettin' late in the day, and hadn't you better stop all night with us?"

"No, thank you; I would be really glad to stay, but I must go back to Brier Hill district to-night, where there's to be a meetin'; nor can I stay to supper, but if you have a few oats for that horse o' mine I'll thank you for them for him."

"I have oats as fine as ever grew, and I'll heap the four-quart measure."

The farmer soon returned from feeding the horse, saying, "Elder Peters, I believe you're a wise man and never

talk when there's no sense in it, and that you can keep a secret."

"Well, I hope I am all that you say, though it's giving me a good deal of a compliment."

"I wish that Mrs. Smith"——

"Thank you, Mr. Smith, for addressing me in so respectful a manner when company is present; it's just like you."

"As I was about to say, I wish Mrs. Smith would tell you a bit of her early history. It might be interesting to you. You Methodist preachers, I think, must like opportunities for studying personal history and human nature; it helps you in making up your sermons. Not that you're goin' to tell right out in meetin' anythin' about her."

"Oh, no; and I should be glad to hear such a bit of her history as she might give."

"Well, then, gentlemen, I will tell you. It was my misfortune that, when I was but five years old, my mother died, and my father, Donald Graham, who lived, at the time, at Hardland, died shortly after. And so, an orphan, I fell to the charity of the world and into the special care of the selectmen of a town that always seemed rightly named—Hardland! And an unfeeling man, and one whom now I should call an unimaginative man, one of the Grouts, then living there, undertook to get me 'bound out' to him. I remember crying at the thought of going to live with this Grout. I had seen him at the Hardland meeting-house, and for him my heart had a most pronounced

dislike. But just at that time it happened that a Quaker from Pennsylvania, by the name of Abraham Slayton, journeying through New England, stopped at Hardland for the night, and by some means,—I never knew what,—he learned of the presence of the orphan and of the fact that she didn't want to go where the selectmen thought to send her. And, to make the story short, I was sent to live with him. The selectmen wanted me 'bound out,' but the Quaker refused, and so I escaped not only the fate of living with that Mr. Grout, but also the stigma of being an indentured child. It was a long journey for me down to Philadelphia, about which I remember but little. But I do remember the sad feeling of homesickness that came upon me when I first went among that sombre-dressed and staid people, the Quakers. But Abraham Slayton's wife, Hannah, was a kindly disposed woman and soon made me feel at home with her. She told me of their losing, not many years before, a girl about my age, and that she thought 'Abraham must have taken a liking to thee because of thy looking like her!' And I remember how strangely their 'thee' and 'thy' sounded to my child-ears. You would not care to hear the whole story of the details of my living with them. There were many things they did in their quiet, sober way, which I began to like and for which, I must say, I esteemed them. I had remembered the loss of my little doll that mother bought for me and that father allowed me to play with; but I had never known the reason why it was not sent with my things to

my new home. One day, some time after my going to Slayton's, one of the Quaker preachers, who chanced to be stopping with him, talked with me and tried to convince me that I ought to join the Friends, as he called them. He was persistent in his importuning, and I had almost begun to cry, when Mr. Slayton came in from his farm work, and the first I heard was, 'Tut, tut, thee must not be too anxious about proselyting for the Friends; that little girl may not be able to see as we do, she not having a birthright inheritance with us, and coming away from home, and realizing that she has neither father nor mother in the world. Thee had better stop thy pleading with her to join the Friends, and she'll think a good deal more of thee and of them if thee do. Elizabeth is a good girl and takes kindly to our ways, which are so different from the customs of those not Friends. And,' said he, approaching me and laying his hand kindly on my head, 'thee must forgive me, little girl; it was I who didn't think it well to bring thy little doll with thee, but I wish I had brought it. I'll tell thee what I'll do.—Hannah,' said he, addressing his wife, 'when thee goes to the store, thee take this money, and, strange as it may seem to world's people for a Friend to buy anything that is a graven image or likeness, thee get this girl a doll, and bring it home to her.' And then addressing me he said, 'Now Elizabeth, thee must not play with thy doll on First day, but thee must go to meeting with us on that day, and if thee behaves well and does not get uneasy while the Friends are waiting for

the spirit to move, thee need not go to meeting on Fourth day, but thee can have thy meeting with thyself and thy doll on that day, and thee can play with it some on any day except First day. And,' said he, addressing his wife, 'Hannah, hadn't thee better send over to Ezekiel's and have him send Hannah, thy namesake, to play with Elizabeth? And, Elizabeth, be kind to the little girl; I think she is a good child. And, Elizabeth, thee can have a little flower bed out in the garden, and be just as happy as the birds that sing for thee.' 'Thank you, thank you,' said I, my heart was so warm with joy. Jumping from the chair where I was sitting, I ran to him, exclaiming as I reached up my hands, 'Here, good Mr. Slayton, let me give you a kiss!' 'Yes, little child,' said he, 'we believe in speaking when the spirit moves, and that's only thy way of living up to the doctrine of the Friends about the inner sight.' I gave him fully half a dozen kisses; and it is needless to say that he and I were friends ever after, and that the name of Abraham Slayton is very dear to me still."

"Good!" exclaimed Elder Peters, "and that 'inner sight' of the Quakers is only another name for what we Methodists call the 'leadings of the Spirit,' and what a poetical friend of mine over to Wayfield calls 'intuitions.' And how foolish 'tis to quarrel over names, as so many do, when if they'd only think on't, they all mean about the same thing."

"Elder Peters, you are right, and sensible, and, asking you to forgive me for being personal, I think you too

much of a man to allow your speech to be marred by inelegances, such, for instance, as the word 'to' in your phrase, 'over to Wayfield.' Correctness in language gives force to an utterance. Your opportunities for culture may have been few, and you are excusable for errors, but the fewer inaccuracies your speech discovers, the better the effect of your discourse."

"Thank you, Mrs. Smith; and as it's a part of a Methodist preacher's duty to improve, I'll try to heed your suggestions."

"Mrs. Smith," said the farmer, "has an idea of the importance of words, as I have occasion to know by her frequent cautions to me."

"Well, she's right. I am grateful for her hints, and let me ask her to continue the story of her Quaker life."

"One other scene I will mention, to show you how positive the Quakers are in their opinions, and yet how liberal. One day, a year after the occurrences just spoken of, Mr. Slayton called me to him and said, 'Elizabeth, there is no bond of the law to make us keep thee a day, or for thee to stay a day with us. We only promised to keep thee, and that promise we shall fulfill. Thee is old enough now to know what we think to do for thee. We will board thee, and clothe thee, and send thee to the school for the Friends' children, and we will minister to thee if thee is sick. And when thee goes, if thee stays till thee is eighteen, thee shall have one hundred dollars and two suits of new clothes. They will have to be of such

material as Friends use ; but one of the suits need not be made up, and when thee goes thee can have it made up in form different from what the Friends wear.' This plan of the good Quaker was carried out to the letter ; and the morning when I left, Mrs. Slayton said, "Thee will find thy new suit, all made up, in the keeping-room, where thee can put it on, and thee will also find a roll of cloth for the other suit, to make up according to thy fancy. Here is five dollars of silver money with which thee can pay the dress-maker for her work.' Then Mr. Slayton said, 'Elizabeth, when thee comes out from the keeping-room thee shall have thy hundred dollars, all in good paper money on a New York bank.' And that sum, with as much more which Mr. Smith had earned working out, was the first money paid on this place, which is now clear of debt. You asked me concerning my faith, and I may say I believe somewhat in the Quaker ideas. There's something within us that teaches us what is best to do ; and, if we follow that teaching, it is very sure to lead us right. That following will give us serenity of soul and power to concentrate our minds on any one thing. And, while it does not lead one to be willful, in the worst sense of the word, it gives him a great power of will in doing the right. Away back in my childhood at Abraham Slayton's, began my tuitioning, which has led me to have, as Mr. Smith thinks, a good deal of will power."

"Yes," said Mr. Smith, "she has a will, but I'll venture to say, there's not a woman in all Dayville, or a dozen

towns, that so little exercises her will against her husband as does that same one that's talkin' to you."

"And now, gentlemen," said Mrs. Smith, "if that's all of my history you wish to hear, it's all I have time to tell. And let me ask you, Elder Peters, concerning your family—you have one, I believe?"

"Yes, part here, in this world, and part of them, I trust, in heaven. My son died several years ago; his mother, the sainted woman, a year or two later; and both, I know, are on the other shore, safe with Jesus. My daughter remains, to cheer me in my loneliness. She's now twenty, and has been to school enough so that she's teachin' a few miles from Ridgeway. She likes books well, and her brother Wilbur F.—Wilbur Fisk, you know, named after one of our shining lights—was about fitted to go to old Wilbryum, when the Lord took him. His death gave me great sorrow, but I'm resigned; and I'm thankful that I have one left. She is a good servant of the Master."

"Perhaps, Mr. Peters, you could change your manner of traveling, and get a buggy from some of your brethren and bring your daughter this way, to make us a visit, when you come over to hold your Tuesday meeting. It's the custom here for the teachers to board round, and Miss Sampson will be here that day. I presume that Miss Sampson and Miss Peters would like to become acquainted."

"All right," said Elder Peters; "and shall we have a word of prayer before I go?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Smith; "and won't you sing one of your Methodist hymns? I've heard them somewhere, and I like some of them very much. There's one, 'Angels now are hovering round us,' I was humming this very morning."

"Well," said Mr. Peters, "if you do not wish that one, perhaps I can sing a few verses of

'O, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise.'

And there's that other,

'My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights;'

and still another is,

'Burst, ye emerald gates and bring
To my 'raptured vision;'

and then there is Charles Wesley's best."

"You mean, 'Jesus, lover of my soul?'"

"Yes; and which will you have?"

"Why, the last one, of course, and the first."

To the good old tune of Ortonville, the itinerant gave, with his rich tenor voice, the initial psalm of the Methodist hymnal of those days. And finely in accord with the home-scene around him and with the mellow glories of the western sky that was radiant with joy at the wealth of the beauties of nature, and blending with the melodies of robin-songs, and zephyrs, and murmuring brooks of the landscape, the voice of John Peters, to the tune of

Martyn, went through the stanzas of that sweetest of all hymns that sing of the Christ. And beautiful to sublimity was the culmination of the inspiring lyric,

"Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity."

A brief and reverent prayer by Elder Peters followed; and with his earnest "God bless you all," and "Peace be to this house," and a kiss for Agnes, he was soon on his way to Brier Hill.

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER CONVERSATION AND ANOTHER DRIVE.

AFTER breakfast and prayers were over the next morning, Mrs. Smith said, "Husband, while Agnes is at play in the garden, can't you wait a little while? I want to continue that talk we had yesterday morning before Squire Williams came."

"All right; not much to do now that's hurryin', between plantin' an' hoein'."

"I wanted to say that it's not man's will conquering woman's will, nor woman's will conquering man's will, that is needed to make a happy home. It is the spiritual conquering the physical, the material, the earthly, the selfish, that is needed to give joyous life for the individual, or domestic felicity in a family. And I don't wish to infer that you're a selfish man. No, far, far from it; yet it cost a terrible struggle to conquer your will; but I succeeded and you acquiesced, and there's the difference between you and some other folks. Take, for instance, the case of the Athertons. It is the woman at that house who should be conquered, because she is by far the more selfish of the two, if, indeed, Mr. Atherton can be called in the least selfish—my opinion comes largely of your ideas of him, which I have no doubt are correct. And when he,

the spiritual, noble man, asserts the right to be ruler, which right he, from his spirituality, has, and conquers her will in that manner—and he conquers in no other way—which, did she accept, the conquering would prove the best blessing possible for her, she rebels, and awakens the antagonism of her selfish nature to its intensest and most unreasonable expression. And war results where there should be only peace; and he who so much needs the inspiration of love, and who would pay back nobly from the wealth of a manly heart for all affection bestowed, receives, instead, the opposition of a nature strong only to rebel, intense only to hate. It is one of the greatest wonders to me that such a man as Atherton could marry the woman he did.”

“It is a wonder, indeed, and how I do thank Heaven for the blessings that are mine! What a contrast between my lot and his!”

“How good, and how like you it is, husband, to speak as you do! You have found that the spirit is the best of you, and have kept that element dominant until it has come to have almost absolute sway over the material. You think me spiritual; and two spiritually minded people are not likely to be antagonistic. Spirit is harmonious with itself. Harmonious in our life, we have, also, each of us had soul-growth, and one has not grown away from the other. One does not feel that the other is a drag and a burden, but each finds the other a helper and an inspiration! Each more and more believes that the union so

well begun on earth shall continue in the country of the Beyond; that mates on earth shall be mated forever there!"

"My own Elizabeth, who taught you all this? It sounds like words from another world."

"They may come from beyond our ken; but, my own, you inspire me to say them. And there's another fact of which I wish to speak. Your love so exalts me that I cannot afford to come down from the heights on which you place me, to act the part of dictator, and demand my 'rights.' I have something better, grander, more ennobling, than my 'rights,' the love of a thoroughly unselfish man, who believes in me, believes in the Christ and in the Christian's God, and who, in all his acts, lives up to the beautiful ideals that are given him. And if your fine life and growth of soul result from your Christian faith, I must, with you, believe in the Christ. You please me because you never argue 'p'int's o' doctrine' (I use those words because that's the phrase with some of your church people), and I wish, Daniel, you would make use of language a little different from that in stereotyped use by religious people hereabouts. Instead of 'p'int's o' doctrine,' say ideas of the better life, or of the Christian life. Wouldn't that suit as well?"

"Yes, 'twould, Lizzie."

"As I before said, there must be something in your religion that makes you so obliging, so willing to give up your willfulness, that hardest thing in the world for a man to do, and which you have done so cheerfully, and, in fact,

with so much delight all these years. I never could believe in Christ, if some who profess to be His followers were the only examples. But, when I see you, day after day, so patient and so good, making such a happy home for me, and allowing me to live as ideally as I choose and according to my own standard, and never rallying me concerning those notions which I formed while living among my good Quaker friends,—that notion, for instance, about the inner sight,—I am compelled to say there's something in your religion, and I wish it were my religion also. For some time I have been thinking that Christ was divine as well as human, very God as well as very man. That is, the truth came to me yesterday after Elder Peters had been speaking and singing those heavenly strains,—

‘Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find.’”

“And so you begin to believe in Christ; you always did believe in me and I always did believe in you, and we always were one.”

“Yes, husband, I do believe in Christ.”

“There, Lizzie, if you haven't uttered the very words laid down for the beginning of the whole Christian life!”

“What words?”

“I do believe in Christ. Those are the very words prescribed, and you meant them, as you mean all you say. They came from your heart.”

“And didn't I hear you read, from an ancient book, the other day, ‘With the heart man believeth unto righteous-

ness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation?' ”

“Yes, and your heart has believed and does believe, and you have ‘made confession unto salvation.’ We always were one, Lizzie, and now we are ‘one in Christ Jesus.’” And throwing his arms around his wife, he pressed her to his heart, exclaiming, “More than ever mine !”

“Yes, two souls mated forever !”

“Ah, wife, if that which proved the Waterloo for my selfish nature wasn't Austerlitz for my real self ! With me it was not as 'twas with Napoleon, victory first and defeat afterwards, but first Waterloo to all that was bad in me, and for all that was good, Austerlitz, then and ever since !”

“Admirable man, I join you in your exultation. It is worth worlds to be the wife of such a noble conqueror as you are. I don't mind your using figures drawn from such bloody scenes as those suggested by the battle fields you mention, though my good Quaker friends might demur at such an apparent violation of their peace-doctrines.”

“I know it, wife, but I am thinking, not of the bloodshed, only of the victory ; and somehow I like to read of the wars of Napoleon.”

“Yes ; and you have done better than he ; for you have ruled your own spirit, and according to that same old book, ‘Better is he who ruleth his own spirit than he who taketh a city.’”

"And if I did do better than to take a city I had the help of a powerful ally in the undertaking."

"Thank you, dear. There's another quotation which might apply to all our joys: 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'"

"I do declare, Elizabeth, I believe you can quote more Scriptur' than the minister, and apply it better than he; and that's said beggin' your pardon for mentionin' you in the same breath with that piece o' formality and coldness, the Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber. One thing leads to another. For this long while I've been wantin' to say something to somebody about the minister; but I've held my tongue for the sake of the cause; and with the exception of speaking yesterd'y to Squire Williams, I haven't said aught against the one occupying the place of prominence in God's house. I didn't want to speak disparagin' of a professor, for there's many who like to live on the failin's of others, when that's no excuse for them. You wouldn't be so foolish as that, but still I didn't want to say a word and never did till what I said yesterd'y. That you did not hear, and now that you are on the Lord's side, it'll do no harm."

"No, it will not."

"You have always been, in what you call your spiritual life, a great help to me in tryin' to live a Christian. And I have needed that help and all other possible help to keep me in the way, so many were my discouragements from those who professed to be the Lord's. You re-

member when the little boy was born and you were havin' the hardest kind o' a time to recover from the sickness, and you urged me to go to meetin' that second Sunday after his birth. And I went, and I never told you what a miserable day I had of it. Mr. Barber preached one of his formal discourses about the 'probabilities of the millennium, the conversion of the heathen, and the restoration of the Jews!' And there I was, a poor, sad-hearted mortal, not knowin' whether the one best friend of my life was goin' to survive the sickness she suffered to give the completest proof of her love, a son to perpetuate my name—there I was, feelin' almost as if I had committed an unpardonable sin for leavin' you even when you had urged me to go—there I was, pantin' for some word of hope, in sermon or prayer. But not one did he have, from 'first' to 'fifteenthly.' The 'improvement' with which he closed was about the same as he always gives, and his prayer was the stereotyped one he has pronounced for the twenty-five years he has been at Dayville. You remember, perhaps, how it starts off? It is well enough, to be sure, but when said continually to the same congregation, it appears very much like one of the 'vain repetitions' which is mentioned in the old book as one of the sins of the heathen. It runs, 'O Thou most high and ever lifted up, Thou only wise and eternal God, who hast ever been; Thou Supreme Ruler of the universe, Maker of our bodies and Author of our being, we, the creatures of Thine hand, would come and humbly bow as in the dust before Thee and cry, unworthy.'

So, in regulation style he ran on, and in all his well-wordec' piece there was absolutely nothing that touched the heart or inspired the soul. Even his words, that, in a general way, mentioned the sufferings of mankind, were uttered so coldly that no one could suppose he meant what he said. And here's the way he terminated his speech to the Deity, —the same piece I have heard him speak every time he has honored the Almighty—'Pity the poor and needy that stand in need of the mercies which we enjoy, spread the light of the gospel far and wide, build up Thy cause and kingdom throughout the world until the islands of the sea shall be given unto Thee, and the heathen for Thine inheritance, and until to Thee every knee shall bow and until unto Thee all the nations come. And these and all other unmerited favors we would meekly crave and humbly beg, not because of any work or worthiness of our own, for all our righteousness is as filthy rags, but in the name of Thy Son, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be equal honors and undivided praises, now and ever, world without end; Amen!' His declamations to his congregation and to God are just like himself and his people, formal, cold, stately, correct as a granite post and as comforting for a pillow; pure and bright as an iceberg in the moonlight, and—as warm! His inquiries of me, after the sermon, in reference to your health, had no more heart in them than does the talk of Lawyer Cheatham, of Wayfield."

"Well, I think you have the right idea of the man and

his performances ; and, dear, at times in your earnestness your language is elegant."

"Thank you, dearest."

"Best one, in my compliment there's a hint that you can still more improve."

"Thank you ; I'll try."

"You will succeed, and I shall be grateful."

"You remember the kind messages from Mr. and Mrs. Williams that Sunday, and that she seconded her words with a vial of blackberry cordial and a dish of apple jelly, saying she believed it right, even according to old standards, to do 'works of necessity and mercy' on the Lord's day? You thought the delicacies just the thing, and said her deed was the 'act of mercy' necessary to be done for your relief."

"Yes, I remember it all. When people are sick there comes a time when some special kind of nourishment seems vital to their recovery ; and, because it so really is, or because so it seems, they must have the article, and having it they're quite sure of recovery."

"But here comes Squire Williams with his lumber-box wagon, to get those potatoes, and he has some one with him. It is Widow Wilcutt, I think. Squire and I stopped there yesterday, and asked her to come down and work for you to-day, for you have more than you ought to do."

"Where's the pay for her work, Daniel?"

"I have it, right here, Lizzie ; Squire Williams advanced it as part pay on some veal he's to have ; an' more'n that,

Mrs. Wilcutt said she wouldn't take a cent from us, for you'd been kind enough to her to pay for a dozen days' work."

"How thoughtful you are!"

Mrs. Wilcutt here made her appearance, and, greetings done, Mrs. Smith called Agnes from the garden, and Squire Williams declining to join them, the Smiths and Mrs. Wilcutt partook of a steaming repast. Prayers over, and the little girl made ready for school with sunbonnet, dinner-basket and some flowers for the teacher, Mr. Smith accepted Mr. Williams's invitation for a ride and the squire said, "Come, Agnes, my little girl, take a seat with us and ride to school."

With a hearty kiss Farmer Smith bade his wife good morning, and tenderly, with his heavy hand, touched the cheek of the blue-eyed boy in the cradle. At the school-house, stepping from the wagon, he placed Agnes gently on the turf by the roadside and the little one said:

"Good-bye, papa, I hope thou'll get back all thafe."

Words of love and caution—shall they prove prophetic of a contrast to the wish they voiced?

As the two friends passed a little wood-colored house, just out of Dayville, on the Wayfield road, Smith remarked,

"There's that Edward Atherton—what do you think of him, Squire?"

"Why, I hardly know; he hasn't amounted to much so far as gettin' along in the world is concerned, but I tell you, Neighbor Smith, I don't like to join in the 'speech o'

people' against him for bein' what they call 'shif'less.' True, he hasn't done much that's counted to his worldly advantage. He's a man of ideas and hasn't been able yet to bring them to a head. Perhaps he's done all that he could, and then again, neighbor, to tell the truth,—you won't repeat what I say, will you?"

"No, certainly not."

"To tell the truth, I don't know what sort of a family he has. Bright-lookin' little boy I've seen at the door; he's been over to my house to borrow a paper, now and then, for 'papa to read.' And he's always so respectful and manly in speakin' to me and sayin' 'thank you,' and so prompt in returnin' the papers, that I can't help likin' the little fellow. More than once my wife has stopped him to give him a piece of gingerbread or a Seek-no-further apple, one o' the kind she sets a store by, and one day I found him there with her, tellin' to her the story of Joseph and his brethren, puttin' it all in, coat of many colors, curious dreams, the selling into Egypt, and the whole thing, clean through, till Joseph became second in the land of Egypt, and his brethren came down to buy corn of him. He placed the emphasis where it belonged; and I tell you, Neighbor Smith, my heart was touched a great sight more than it ever was by Barber's sermons; and now I think it's a pity somethin' can't be done for that boy, to give him a chance for schoolin'. 'Twould be too bad to have the little fellow slave his life away on a farm, an' besides, he isn't strong enough for it. I don't

think he's one o' the kind o' boys that get 'too big for their breeches,' as the sayin' is. And I think he'd appreciate every kindness done for him, and 'twould make a feller feel good when he was gettin' old,—and Neighbor Smith, 'twon't be many years afore my hair'll be white as the driven snow,—'twould make a feller feel good to have a young, smart minister, from a city pulpit, comin' here to Dayville to preach on exchange, or a young attorney comin' from his law office at Wayfield, or some other town, over here to try a case, and have him point out a fellow by the name o' Williams as the one 'twas the makin' of him. I've never said nothin' to my wife about my proposed plans concerning the boy, but I must act afore long; and I think that out of the money I have t'intrist I can take what is necessary to give the boy a start, and then have enough left to support my wife if I should be taken away. And I'll have papers fixed up to that effect at once."

"By the way, Squire, did you, as we passed, see his wife get up from her seat at the window, and toss her work down impatiently, so unlike the way Mrs. Williams has, and unlike the quiet little woman that swears by a man by the name o' Smith?"

"Yes, I did; and that brings me to the rest of my story,—Edward Atherton has the wrong kind of a wife—no wife at all."

"Well, there, Mr. Williams, your idee is just like mine, and I think Mrs. Smith has the same notion, too."

"Neighbor, there are some things in this world that are

unaccountable. Why Providence should allow such a man as Edward Atherton to be cursed with so poor a piece of humanity as Hetty Simpkins was and is, I can't see, for the life of me."

"Nor I, either. It is a mystery indeed."

At Wayfield the two friends stopped at the savings bank, where Smith deposited the silver dollars for his children, and where he was introduced by Williams to several acquaintances of the latter, as the "rising farmer of our town of Dayville, whom it is a pleasure for any one to know." One of these acquaintances was a young lawyer, who had recently located at Wayfield, and who, though new in the legal profession had been commissioned a justice of the peace. After dinner with this Wayfield magistrate, his guests walked to the registry of deeds, where Smith read the record of the paper his friend had given, making him owner of his farm; and the two then started for Dayville. They carried, each of them, the card of "Andrew M. Harrison, Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law," concerning whom and whose good prospects for success in his profession, Squire Williams discoursed to his friend, and as they neared Atherton's house, predicted, as Mr. Smith always remembered, "I tell you, neighbor, that lawyer 'll be heard from some o' these days, not only in Wayfield, but all through the county, and all over the state—now you mark my words. What a difference between him and Cheatham! One I've found to be the very soul of honor, and the other's—well, he's rightly named,

takin' out one letter an' changin' another—C-h-e-a-t'e-m, that's it. Though this other lawyer is one of the fold, 'in good an' regular standing;' as the phrase runs, an' Harrison is said to be an infidel, I'd trust a case with him a good deal quicker 'n with the church member. I verily think, Friend Smith, that Harrison is an honest lawyer, an' never takes up a case unless he thinks he's servin' the ends of justice."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ATHERTONS AND AN ACCIDENT.

THE neighbors of Edward Atherton did not overestimate the infelicity of his domestic relations, and they often wondered that a man of his great superiority should have married the woman he did. And yet, even the most observing and knowing of them did not fully understand the excellence that contrasted with the cheapness of the one who belittled his name, burdened his life, and tortured his soul.

In the exhibition of his high qualities, Atherton took care not to excite the jealousy that inferiority has of worth ; yet his doing an act the most inconsequential possible for an act to be, and still be the act of a noble nature, would call forth her spleen who should have admired him and counted it an honor to be associated with him. Although, like others of his make-up, he was naturally sensitive, having schooled himself into the perfection of patience, he bravely and quietly endured the trials of his lot. And the home by the roadside, unpleasant home though it was, failed of many a tumult and many a battle that but for the wisdom and fortitude of this manly man, would have been there enacted.

Not much concerning Atherton's history was known, at

Dayville, beyond the fact that, ten years before, he came from the town of his ancestors, in the vicinity of Boston, and that he was supposed to be an inventor. An accident had lamed him and laid him up with a fever, during which, at the request of the physician—not Dr. Johnson, to his credit be it said—the nurse was Hetty Simpkins, daughter of a meddlesome Dayville “institution,” “Old Sam Simpkins,” and she—married the patient. His character is warrant for the fact that, even though he was, by the severe mental exertion of the work on his inventions, and by illness, greatly reduced in will-power, had she supplemented cunning and forcefulness of will with other arts, she would have failed of the capture which she accomplished by management and persisting in her purpose. Two years after the ill-advised marriage a son was born, who inherited his father’s name and all his good qualities and none of the traits of his mother, and who, as he grew, more and more resembled the former, and more and more contrasted with the other.

The gust of unpleasantness observed by Smith and Williams on their drive heralded a specimen storm, prologued a typical scene in the drama of the troubled life of the brave but unfortunate man, a scene illustrating the characteristics of the three occupants of the house where he called it home, who, lacking a mate for his soul, had no home.

“Edward, my boy,” said Mr. Atherton, looking up from his paper, and addressing his son and namesake, “you re-

member, do you, my asking you not to leave a board with the point of a nail sticking up in it, where a person or a horse could step on it? It might do a great deal of damage; a horse worth two hundred dollars, by stepping on a rusty nail, might be injured enough to lessen his value by half; and a child might be lamed for life. You remember, Edward?"

"Yes, papa, and I'll try to be careful," said the boy, looking up from the book he was reading.

"And remember, too, that a piece of paper, especially white paper, if left by the roadside, where the wind could blow it up suddenly in front of a horse, might so frighten him that he would run and kill the people who were in the wagon which he was drawing."

"Yes, papa, I'll remember."

And now the dissonance, to jar the harmonies.

"Well, just like you, fussy man, always full of your notions, never doin' nothin' to get a livin', and fillin' your boy's head with book larnin' and teachin' him to be so careful that he'll never do nothin' 't amounts t' anythin'. You'll never have money 'nough t' own a horse. Never had in the house, sence I knowed ye, more'n a bushel o' taters to a time, nor more'n a piller-case o' flour; 'n I have to slave myself just all my born days—so, there, now!" The waspish woman emphasized her closing utterance with a spat of her foot on the floor, scratching her head with a knitting-needle, throwing down her "work," and going snappishly across the room to another seat, as if

to get as far from her husband as possible. He answered not a word to her tirade, but heaved a sigh full of meaning, and the little boy looked up into his face, laid his hands tenderly on his knee and said, "Papa, I love you." A pressure of the father's hand on the lad's head was the response.

"There," said Atherton, looking from the window, "is that about which we have been talking, Edward; Mr. Barnes's hired man has been out to his back lot and torn down that shanty, and a piece of board has dropped off the load he is bringing; I think I'll run out and pick it up, for it has a nail in it, and it lies just where a horse would step on it."

"That's so, papa;" and the little boy, as his father arose to leave the room, drew him down and gave him a kiss with more than his usual emphasis of tenderness.

"Mighty sweet you are towards your dad, Ed, ain't ye!" said the mother, when Atherton had left the room; "ye never think to kiss your mother, do ye, Ed!"

"Mamma, please, why don't you call me Edward, the same as papa does? and what makes you always scold at papa? He wasn't scolding at you."

"Well, p'raps he wasn't, but ——"

"Oh!" screamed the boy at the top of his voice.

"An' what's the matter now frightened ye, tender, good-fer-nothin' son o' yer father?"

But the boy heeded not the spleen. He rushed out of the door, to see the prostrate form of his father. And,

kneeling by his side, he exclaimed, " Papa, papa ! " but no response came.

That kiss was the last salutation to the one he loved. How beautiful the parting ! how poetically fit ! Had the child premonition when he gave that kiss ?

Atherton had picked up the board with the nail, and stood holding it in his hand, as, looking up, he saw Esquire Williams and Farmer Smith nearing him on their return from Wayfield. And, just as they had exchanged greetings with him and he had told them of his errand to the street, a horse and buggy burst around the turn of the road from the village, at lightning speed, and in an instant was upon the group. Attempting to pass Williams's team on the side where Atherton was standing, he struck one of the thills against the head of Mr. Williams, knocking him from his seat to the ground, the other thill striking Mr. Atherton down and killing him almost instantly. Smith, in jumping from the wagon, caught his foot in the lines of the harness of the runaway horse and fell to the ground on the opposite side, twice breaking a bone of his right leg and so stunning himself that he was for some time unconscious. The owner of the team, Mr. Jameson, one of the Dayville farmers, soon appeared, running in breathless haste after his horse, which, after doing the damage, dashed against the fence at the roadside with such force as to throw himself down. Jameson exclaimed as he neared the scene, " That air pesky paper flung out of the back door of the store blew in front of my horse and caused all this trouble."

He evidently supposed at the time that the accident had resulted in nothing but a capsizing and the breaking of the harness and vehicle, and perhaps the stunning of the men. Coming nearer, he saw the ghastly face of Williams, and the blood oozing from the wound, in strange contrast with the verdure of the turf on which his head was pillowed. Near him was the motionless form of Atherton, with the little boy by his side, sobbing almost to distraction.

"What on airth!" exclaimed he, "what on airth! if Squire Williams and Edward Atherton ain't killed outright!"

"Well, jus' like that foolish husband o' mine to foller out his idees till they git him inter trouble," exclaimed Mrs. Atherton, who now appeared upon the scene; "it's a wonder he didn't take Ed out and have him killed at the same time."

"'Most wish 't I had died, too," moaned the little fellow; "father's all I had, and you never was good to me."

"Never will be till ye're different from the foolishness of yer dad."

"Look a' here, Mis' Atherton," said Jameson, minding nothing about his horse and beginning to scan the prostrate forms, to see what he could do in the case, "look a' here, Mis' Atherton, I think you're speakin' rather harsh right in the presence o' death. It's no more'n natural the boy should take on."

"What now?" exclaimed Dr. Johnson, as he, with several other villagers, attracted by the running of the horse, approached the scene of the accident; "What now?"

"Why," said Jameson, "I believe Squire Williams and Mr. Atherton are both dead ; and Smith, there, is hard hurt, and perhaps he'll die, too."

"Not if I can help it," said the physician ; "but I think," he said, after examining Williams and Atherton, "these neighbors are surely killed." Then he went to the other side of the road and for some moments felt the pulse of Mr. Smith, Jameson meanwhile gathering up the fragments of his wagon and starting with the horses towards Williams's barn.

"Jameson," said the doctor, thoughtful for the living as well as for the dead, "you'd better take the horses to my barn ; because, if you go to Williams's at once, the shock of the accident may be too sudden for the good lady there. Just stop at my house and tell Mrs. Johnson, who has good nerves for such an errand, what's happened, and ask her to go around and break the news gently to Mrs. Williams." And the physician continued at Smith's wrist for some moments, when he exclaimed, "Thank God ! he not only breathes, but opens his eyes." And he paused to hear:—

"Doctor, go and see Squire Williams and Mr. Atherton ; perhaps they need help more than I."

"Ah, my good sir," replied Dr. Johnson, "it's noble of you to think of others before yourself. You are worthy to be quoted with Sir Philip Sidney, who, wounded on the battle-field, pushed aside the proffered cup of cold water that it might be carried to another, suffering as he

thought, worse than himself, and uttered the immortal words, 'This man's necessities are greater than mine!' But those friends of yours are gone."

"May Heaven pity that boy and Mrs. Williams; how glad I am to be alive for the sake of those at home."

"Brave man, and unselfish as brave!"

Dispatching one neighbor for one article and another for another, the Dayville doctor soon had a litter constructed, on which Smith was laid, to be taken to his own home, where it was decided to perform the operation of setting the broken leg. The lifeless form of Atherton was carried into his house, from which, half an hour before, he had gone forth the recipient of the sweetest tenderness a father could wish from a child, and the most unfeeling bitterness it seemed possible for woman to pour upon man. Returning to the road, the doctor, leaving a neighbor to watch by Smith's side, himself walked with the men who volunteered to carry the dead justice of Dayville to his home. And the women of the village gathered at the house, some from curiosity and some to proffer their sympathy to Mrs. Williams. Returning to the scene of the accident, the doctor found Elder Peters, who with characteristic promptness exclaimed, "They've told me all; and now, doctor, what can I do? I'm acquainted down to Smith's house, and I'll go, if you wish, and will try carefully to tell of the accident. Some one ought to go ahead of those who carry the wounded man, and go before some unthinking person carelessly speaks the harsh news."

"All right, Elder Peters, you're just the man ; drive fast till you get near the house, and then go slow, so as not to alarm good Mrs. Smith by any Jehu speed. You would, yourself, have thought to be that careful, I doubt not."

"I had thought of it ; pleasant, isn't it, in an emergency, to have two of the same mind ?"

As Elder Peters leisurely rode up to her house, Mrs. Smith, who was sitting in the yard rocking the cradle of her boy, greeted the preacher :

"I am glad to see you ; hardly expected you, though, so soon."

"I was going to pass near here this afternoon,—that is, come as near as the Cross-roads and go on towards Hard-land, where I was to preach to-night, and thought I should like to call here, but at the time didn't think of having an errand, and the kind of an errand that I am commissioned to bring. It's only a brave woman like yourself that one wants to see around in an emergency, and I hope you are in your usual health."

"I am ; but, Mr. Peters, what is it you have to say ? It must be something unusual. Mr. Smith went to Wayfield to day with Esquire Williams—nothing has happened to him, I hope ?—and nothing to either of them ?"

"Mrs. Smith, you are leading me to my errand."

"Tell me, Mr. Peters !"

"An accident,—but your husband lives, and, though seriously injured, will doubtless recover, in time."

"Thank God that he lives !" and bending to the cradle

on the turf, the mother kissed the blue-eyed sleeper, saying as she did it, "Dear little man! so like his papa!"

"Yes, madam, thank God that it's no worse."

"And I am grateful to you, Mr. Peters, for your thoughtfulness in coming, in your good way, to tell me of what has happened. And how about Mr. Williams?"

"Well, madam, he's gone."

"Dear Mrs. Williams, I wonder how she will endure it. The two were thoroughly devoted to each other. She was good to me, and Esquire Williams was a real neighbor. Why, just think of it, Mr. Peters, it was only yesterday that Esquire Williams, of whom Mr. Smith bought this place, came over here to cut off fifty dollars of the last hundred that was due him on the farm, and brought a discharge of the mortgage and a warranty deed, all made out, and signed Theophilus Williams; and he told my husband that he wanted nothing left against him if he,—that is, Mr. Williams,—should be taken away. But little did he dream what was in store for him."

"That's it, madam; little do any of us know what there is in the future for us, and it stands us in hand to do with our might what our hands find to do, especially if it's so good a deed as that which you attribute to Mr. Williams."

"Well, Mr. Peters, how did the accident occur?"

"It would take a long time to tell you; but Mr. Jame-son's horse was frightened up at Dayville, by a piece of paper blown in his face, that had been thrown out of the 'back store,' and he ran down the Wayfield road, and in

front of Edward Atherton's house he came upon Squire Williams and Mr. Smith, who were sitting in a buggy, talking with Mr. Atherton. The latter stood on the turf by the roadside, and I learned from his little boy that he had come out to pick up a board that had a nail in it, so that it might not hurt a horse's foot."

"Just like the thoughtful Mr. Atherton, always careful; and I've heard that his wife just fills his life with misery about his 'idees,' as she calls them."

"I presume that's true; and I drew from the little boy the statement that she had been giving his father a real scolding just before he went out to pick up the board. 'And,' said the little fellow, 'before he went out I gave him just the best kiss I could,' and sobbing he could say no more."

"Precious one, who'll care for him now!"

"Mrs. Smith, hadn't I better go back to the school-house and ask Miss Sampson to send your girl home with me, that you may tell her in your own mother's way what has happened? She can ride on the horse with me." And without waiting for a reply, Peters spurred his horse towards the school-house, soon returning with the child, who exclaimed with wonder, "Why, mamma, what maketh thu tho thad?"

"My child," replied the mother, "your father is badly hurt—but he's alive and is coming home." Looking up the road she exclaimed, "There!"

A woman who is never lacking in tenderness has no

compunctions to assuage in the emergency of her husband in trouble, and needs not then to bestow on him that excessive amount of caressing which marks the course of an unfaithful wife when called to such a trial; and she has more nerve and more wisdom in action than does the one who is obliged to atone, in an exigency, for past unkindness. When Dr. Johnson and his assistants arrived with the injured man, Mrs. Smith gave one gentle kiss, that meant volumes, and spoke these calm words of tenderness: "Brave man, you will live through it."

"Yes; and I am glad to be at home. I must not talk much, though, for I think I'm more hurt than they supposed. Besides the ache of the broken limb, there's a pain here;" and he laid his left hand upon his bosom and closed his eyes, as if wishing to rest. Kneeling at his side the little girl bathed his hands with kisses until her mother gently drew her away, softly saying, "It is good and just like you to be kind to papa, but a child who has always been dutiful and affectionate to her father needs not to tell him in his trouble that she loves him."

"Thath tho, mamma, and when he took me down from Thquire Williamtheth wagon, thith morning, I felt like kithing him, and I did, before the whole thkool."

"Yes, my dear, and that kiss will be worth more than gold for you to treasure in memory. And did you say anything to him?"

"Yeth, mamma, I thaid 'Good-bye, papa, and I hope thu'll get back thafe.'"

"And who knows but that it was in answer to your heart's wish that your papa came back alive and wasn't killed like the others! At any rate, Agnes, remember your father's lifting you from the wagon, your kiss and your good-bye."

"Yeth, mamma, I'll be thure; and who were killed? Wath Thquire Williamth one of them?"

"Yes, and the other was Mr. Atherton, who lives up there just beyond Dayville⁴ village, on the Wayfield road."

And Mrs. Smith, to impress her child with the importance of keeping from the highway things likely to frighten a horse, told Agnes of the circumstances of the accident, closing with,

"Perhaps Mr. Peters will talk with you, Agnes."

And in tones of tenderness, as the two sat in the shade of the maples, where often, of a summer's day, Agnes had played "keep house" with her dolls, the disciple of Wesley and of the Master who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," talked to her of the Great Father and the Savior; while the child looked reverently and earnestly up to the face of the preacher, a most willing and interested auditor. Laying his hand softly on her head, he said, "Be a brave little lady, and keep as quiet as possible, and I think your papa will be able to sit up soon."

The operation of setting the broken leg completed, Mrs. Smith said, as Dr. Johnson was about to give Mr. Smith "something to make him sleep,"

"Doctor, begging your pardon, I must object to that.

Also, let me say, tincture of myrrh is a favorite remedy of mine for overcoming pain and taking out soreness, and we always have it in the house."

There was respectfulness, and yet firmness, in this utterance—to which the physician responded,

"As to the sleeping-powders, do as you please. The tincture you name isn't according to the practice of my school. But I have long ago learned that doctors don't know everything. So use the wash you desire."

And the wound was bathed with the soothing liquid, and the patient soon sank into a refreshing slumber that was far better than sleep induced by opiates. Awakening an hour later he said to the itinerant, who was sitting near,

"That is you, Mr. Peters, isn't it?"

"Yes, I came along about the time of the accident and was here ahead of you, commissioned by the doctor to break the news. I am glad to see you feeling better; and now as the sun is only an hour high, and I have to preach, to-night, twenty miles from here, at Hardland, I've but a moment to kneel and thank Heaven that it is as well with us as it is; and God will hear us just as well with a dozen words, spoken in reverence and faith, as He would hear a thousand words."

In that group of earnest ones, petitioning for blessings, Agnes knelt by the side of the preacher; and, folding her hands, repeated of her own accord, in an undertone, the words of his supplication, gratitude and praise:

"Father in heaven, in the midst of our afflictions we

come to Thee in faith and thank Thee that Thy hand still spares, and ask that out of all our trials we may come to rejoice in Thy goodness and to see that Thou wast kind even in the affliction which now appears to us so mysterious. If it be Thy will, grant restoration to him whom Thou hast smitten. With us remember others who are more deeply afflicted than are we. Pity the widow and the orphan boy, and out of Thy mercies minister to their wants. This, and all, we ask in the name of Thy Blessed Son, and we ascribe to Thee the glory due to Thy name; Amen."

"Call when you return from Hardland, Elder Peters," whispered Mr. Smith, as the preacher arose from his knees, "I've something to say to you."

When a short distance from the school-house, on the Hardland road, Elder Peters halted his horse, to inform Miss Sampson, at her boarding-place for that week, how the sufferer was faring; and the errand done, said to his horse, "Come, my brave Billy, it's you and I now." A little farther along, the horse began turning into the yard of a house where occasionally the itinerant had halted, on his rounds, to give a word of religious admonition to the lawless ones living there. And the preacher, in tones as if conversing with a friend, said, "No, Billy, you're a faithful horse and generally know where I want to go, but I guess we won't stop to-night. You ought to have a rest, my brave Billy, but keep along a few miles further and you'll have oats and hay." As if understanding his mas-

ter's words, the steed quickened his steps and bore the itinerant over the hilly road that soon afforded the rider a fine westward view of the meadows and the river. Beyond this, meads and pasture-lands stretched away to the wooded hills, that, bathed in the gold of the glorious sunset, spoke to the preacher of God's goodness and power, and awakened in him thoughts of the grandeur and beauty of the land beyond the tide, until, to voice his joy, he sang,

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green."

And with other inspiring psalmody the itinerant delighted himself as he rose still higher on the mountain way. At the summit he halted his horse, and dismounting, drank from a spring that gurgled from the granite rocks at the side of the road, saying, "Ah, what a blessed emblem of the gospel is this never-failing mountain spring!"

It was not far beyond this that he reached the house of a brother Methodist, who consented to keep the horse of the traveler for the night, and who soon had his own horse brought up from the near pasture and saddled for the preacher's use.

CHAPTER V.

A PREACHING AND A BAPTISMAL CEREMONY.

HIS hearers at Hardland noticed an unusual unction in the words of Elder Peters ; but, while his theme was one with which evidently he designed to awaken the impenitent to contrition, he, for some reason, thought it best not to give the discourse the dramatic effect which it would have had if emphasized with an account of the tragedy at Dayville. Supplementing the preaching service was the usual invitation to "rise for prayers," which was answered by several of the company, for whom there were heartfelt petitions by the itinerant and his class-leader, Samuel Sumner. Words of hope and promise by the beginners in the new life followed, when Elder Peters gave them timely counsel and hearty encouragement, and preacher and people sang, to the good old tune of Dennis,

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love ;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

After leaving the meeting, the preacher told the news of the shocking accident to one of the hearers, who accompanied him, with Mr. Sumner, to the house of the latter, where the itinerant was to be entertained for the night.

This class-leader had been for years a member of the church of the standing order, and had attended their meetings faithfully, and that, with a sincere desire to profit by the preaching of Rev. Abimelech Barrett, the minister of this typical New England town. Yet it was evident that he did not find much to please him in that man's ministrations. Were the truth known, it would be found he had "groaned in spirit" to think that one holding all mankind to be totally depraved should do so little for their salvation as did Mr. Barrett. So when Elder Peters extended the bounds of his Wayfield circuit to Hardland and established preaching there, he found Mr. Sumner among his most willing and constant hearers; and, the good man casting in his lot with the Methodists, he was naturally made the leader of a class which became the nucleus of a society of that order.

In keeping with the plan prescribed by Wesley for the private life of Methodist preachers, the itinerant rose before the sun, read a chapter of Scripture and offered prayer before coming from his room; and he had fed his horse before Mr. Sumner went to the barn. Breakfast over, morning devotions with the Sumners began with the singing of

"Lord, in the morning Thou shalt hear
My voice ascending high."

There was a chapter from the Psalms, an earnest prayer, and Mr. Peters, soon after six o'clock, was going towards the Cross-roads. He made no errand on the way save

changing horses and drinking at his favorite spring. It was not yet nine o'clock when he neared the school-house, where his little friend Agnes handed him a note requesting him not to forget his errand at the farm-house.

"All right, my little girl," said he; "how is your papa this morning?"

"Thum better, I gueth."

Remaining an hour with Mr. Smith, the preacher rode away to visit the people who, he thought, might be interested in the proposed meeting. Returning at four o'clock, he was gladdened with a unique and beautiful scene. Miss Sampson had closed her school a little earlier than usual, and had assembled her pupils around the doorway of the Smith farm-house, as if waiting for something, though exactly what Mr. Peters could not divine. Entering the house he learned the occasion for the group, from the sick man, who said: "I have not told you that, in conversing with me, Mrs. Smith made as good a confession of faith in Christ as need be. On conferring with her I also find that she would like to reaffirm her profession, and, if you please, receive the ordinance of baptism at your hands. I believe you Methodists hold to infant baptism, and we would like to have the children baptized with her."

"Praise the Lord," quietly said Peters; "how beautiful! And you have already been baptized!"

"I have."

The sunbeams, glinting through the maples, seemed not

more genuine than did the preacher's reverent and earnest words to Heaven for "that which God had wrought." Words of peculiar fitness were quoted from the Psalms, and there, in the presence of husband and father and teacher and pupils, the mother and children came before the man of God, whose voice never sounded sweeter than, as, placing the drops from the bowl upon her brow, he said,

"Elizabeth, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Amen."

Increasing in sweetness as he progressed with the service, his voice was tremulous with emotion, yet grand with strength, as he, with beautiful fitness, questioned:

"Who shall say aught against these being baptized of whom the Master said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.' Still deepening in tenderness of tones he pronounced the name of "Agnes Graham" and "Wesley Daniel" Smith in the sacred ceremony, supplementing it with a hymn of the people of fire and song and a benediction that was eloquent almost to grandeur.

"Wasn't Mr. Peters real good!" said one of the children to Miss Sampson, as the teacher and her group were going from the impressive scene.

"Indeed he was, my child, and I hope your parents will come with you to the meeting next Tuesday evening."

"I guess they will, teacher."

"And I'm coming, too," said another.

"And I!" "And I!" chimed in a dozen other voices.

CHAPTER VI.

A PAIR OF MINISTERS, A MASTER OF CEREMONIES, AND A FUNERAL
AT WHICH THEY OFFICIATE.

TO a later day than elsewhere in New England continued, in the region of Dayville and Hardland, the precedence of the "standing order" of religionists, with the ancient regime of strict observances, the frigid manners, and the angularities of character that had there long been regarded as highest and best evidence of real goodness of heart. The cast-iron creed of the forefathers of the people of those towns, as inscribed on the church books, there, the century previous, with its various parts matched together like mosaic work, remained intact, not excepting the provision that, "from the foundation of the world and from all eternity," some were "in God's sovereign pleasure foreordained and elected" to eternal torment, and others were, in the "sovereign pleasure" aforesaid, chosen "heirs of salvation." And these "once in grace were always in grace," and could not "finally fall away," but would come at last "to seats prepared for them in heaven, and to mingle in the assembly of the saints on high." Here still obtained the old time respect for authority, respect which was thought to be equal to love for truth.

And why not? Did not this people hold that authority was truth? that the doctrine authorized as truth was therefore true? As a principal feature of the creed in vogue was the importance of doctrine, hence the importance of those who indoctrinated. These were the Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber and the Reverend Abimelech Barrett. They were singularly alike in physique and in mental make-up. Each was of sturdy build and rather above the medium height, while the gray, calculating eyes of each spoke the discretion that springs from selfishness. Each had a face and a head utterly lacking evidence of the possibility of sentiment or of the vision for discerning spiritual truth, and that indicated, instead, a forceful will-power, a cold intellect that was strong for the mental combat of an argument, and a memory retentive of facts which the mind, not the soul, had gathered and stored away to be used as ammunition in the conflict. Such a make-up, with the perfect health insured by strong digestive powers, that prevented dyspepsia and the resultant despondency, commanded the respect of the unimaginative, opinionated and matter-of-fact people who were their parishioners, and led them to believe that he who possessed such characteristics was not only one of God's very elect, but was called to "dispense the word," as "an under-shepherd of the Master."

For the quarter of a century since, soon after graduating, the one at Andover and the other at Yale, they were "ordained ministers and installed pastors," the one at Day-

ville and the other at Hardland, the Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber and the Reverend Abimelech Barrett had, "each in his appointed place, ministered in sacred things." But neither of them was much worn by the work of his long pastorate. With the law of self-preservation constantly before their eyes, they did not allow their duties to overtax their powers of endurance. At funerals they could don the semblance of weeping, without experiencing any wearing sorrow; weddings at which they officiated gave them neither tumult of joy nor anxiety of mind; baptisms were to them never solemn to sadness, and communion-seasons never overburdened them with the pathos of that supper scene which preceded Gethsemane. Each having, well memorized, a stock of regulation phrases appropriate for those occasions, it was easy to call them into requisition. To their people these phrases, though often used, did not appear hackneyed, but seemed to acquire sacredness by repetition. Through all the Sabbaths of their extended terms, these ministers preached sermons that were sound in doctrinal teaching, and well calculated to fill the hearers with dread of the "Sovereign Ruler of the universe," and lead them to trembling and ready obedience to His commands, and to respect those He had "set as watchmen on the walls of Zion!" These "watchmen," whose pastorates were in a sense the result of, and in a sense the cause of, the continuance of the old order of things, were yet able to take vigilant care that the old ways and theories should still obtain. Settled minis-

ters of the gospel—and only their own sort were ministers of the gospel—were not then, as aforetime, paid salaries that were raised by assessment on the taxpayers of the towns and were collected by law on penalty of levying, in default of payment, on goods and chattels of the delinquents. This was wholly wrong and a sign of the “degeneracy of the times!” But, if, in “temporal matters,” things were “at sixes and sevens,” so much the more need of having the people theologically correct. So the Rev. Messrs. Barber and Barrett were watchful. Looking beyond their own parishes, they had discovered in the neighboring towns a few evidences of dissatisfaction with the ancient standards of belief. A new sect had appeared in some places, to change the current of things, with more baptismal water than had been customary with the “standing order;” here and there, Unitarians or Universalists had, for a time, maintained “stated preaching;” the Episcopalians were doing something, in a quiet way, to get a foothold; and the Methodists appeared, to thaw the icy Calvinism with their zeal, and, with the “whosoever will” of the seer of Patmos as authority and inspiration, to proclaim the gospel tidings to all mankind. At Wayfield and Ridgeway, some of this new sect had made a little headway, but at Dayville there was nothing to give alarm to the “standing order.” At Hardland, however, the Methodists, whom the regulars regarded as more obnoxious than were any of the other novel religionists, had made a beginning, and yet they had not done enough to

break, or greatly weaken, the hold of Mr. Barrett on his people. Still, these ministers, who had so long reigned in undisturbed ecclesiastical authority, and consequent social supremacy, had occasional misgivings that their order would suffer damage from the work of the New Lights, as they were pleased to style the advocates of free salvation. So they frequently met, ostensibly to confer concerning routine matters in their own parishes, but rather to compare notes in reference to the progress of the "strange doctrines" and to enjoin each other to guard against the encroachments of false teachers, and to preserve intact "the faith once delivered to the saints," *i. e.*, the creeds inscribed on the church books at Dayville and Hardland. These conferences evidently reassured them, and where they had so long been dominant, they thought themselves regnant still. And now, by a dispensation of Providence, an occasion had come that would bring them into still higher prominence; for they must officiate at the Williams and Atherton funeral, the first event of so great importance of sadness that had marked the history of the region in a century.

Mr. Barber, who was not lacking in ability to read human nature, and who knew how to manage men and get them to serve his ends, in a way that would not put him under obligation to them, was cognizant of the fact that Bildad Beals, who was "deputy sheriff of Dayville" and perennial candidate for the shrievalty of the shire, and who had now and then managed a funeral, had a great liking

for opportunity for displaying authority, and thought it good policy to invite the officer to act as master of ceremonies at the occasion. The parish committee coinciding with their minister's wishes concerning the conduct of the obsequies, Beals was asked to officiate; and the funeral was appointed to be held at the meeting-house, at one o'clock of the Saturday following the day of the accident. Accordingly, on Friday, "word was given out" in all the schools of Dayville and Hardland. But, as a minister was held to be superior in importance to a layman, even though the latter were acting in official capacity, while the notices published in all the districts in the two towns mentioned the fact that Mr. Barber was to preach, assisted by the Hardland pastor, only the announcements in a few of the districts of Dayville included the name of the conductor of the funeral.

The day came with skies of cloudless blue significant of the serene rest awaiting the just. Airs fragrant with odors of apple orchards and wild flowers, were mellow with the murmur of brooks and glad with the liquid song of birds, who seemed intent in voicing their own joy, to teach man gratitude to Him who made so beautiful the earthly abode of His children. And bird, and breath, and brook, spoke His promise of grace to comfort the bereaved and His approval of the lives of the departed, and hinted of choicer fruitage, finer sweets, and diviner minstrelsy, in the starward land to which the good men had gone. But no such lessons of hope and joy would the stern Calvinists

officiating read in the serenity vouchsafed the time of the sad memorial. To them there was no Divine Benignity. They only thought of God as "great and mighty, high and ever lifted up." And, of course, they being His ministers, it was their prerogative to impress men with the dread majesty of the Deity. This would make them tremble and sob, and fear and sadness befitted the state of "poor, unworthy worms of the dust." And, again, impressing folks would show their importance who impressed—a reason which, whatever they might have said, was largely the cause of their faithfulness in making people quake. At funerals, faithfulness in this direction was especially appropriate; and here was the greatest funeral remembered by the inhabitants or mentioned in the traditions of the times of their ancestors!

To begin the execution of Beals's carefully elaborated plan of the doings of the great day at Dayville, prayer was offered simultaneously by Mr. Barrett over the remains of Atherton at the little brown house, and by Mr. Barber at the house of the deceased magistrate; and the mourners from the former, preceded by Mr. Barrett and the bearers with their burden, arrived at a designated point in the village green, exactly in time to meet the group that under the lead of Mr. Beals came with their bier from the Williams house. Assuming charge of the completed column, at the head of which, arm-in-arm, walked the stern-visaged ministers, Beals, with measured tread, in boots that were painful to hear, conducted the cortege to the meeting-house.

Being on "greater business bent," he had appointed assistants to do the ushering-in-ordinary, and they had completed their assignment just as the procession arrived. One of these deputies was the marshal's son, Quintus Martius Beals, who had been "dedicated to the gospel ministry" by his parents, and who had been given a few terms at an academy, where he had acquired enough knowledge of what his father called "Latting," to make the boy vain of linguistic accomplishments, and so the object of the ridicule of the mischievous ones of the village. He was cross-eyed; and they, because of his vanity, thought it not only allowable, but a duty, to emphasize the fact of this strabismic peculiarity, and so dubbed him "Squintus," a sobriquet by which he was ever after known. His associate on this occasion was Selectman Barnes's son Nelson, who, from his own disagreeable disposition, and his father's authoritative bearing, was never well liked. But for the solemnity of the day, the presence in official capacity of these unpopular young men would have occasioned the keenest jibes the wits of the village could invent. As it was, the deputies went through the programme without a break to mar the day.

Mr. Barber and Mr. Barrett, with faces drawn down to a rigor of severity unusual on their stern features, now walked up the aisle, their austerity of mien increasing at every step, and climbed the winding stairs to their perch in the pulpit. Here they surveyed the assembled throng, that had come from all parts of the town, from Wayfield,

from Hardland, from Ridgeway, and from Brier Hill. Many of them arrived long before the time appointed, and tarried in front of the meeting-house, where they discussed and sighed over the sad taking off. Some, to mingle sympathy with their greed for querying, inquired in subdued tones concerning the sick people in the localities represented; but for the most part curiosity was the motive of the interest manifested. In the entry, where the mourners tarried for a moment, Mrs. Beals was in waiting with a spinster sister, who was good at making "currant wine for communion purposes." The two gave lachrymose evidence of their sympathy, Mrs. Beals supplementing her tears with the proffer of caraway and other "meetin'-seed," and remarking that "we feel for you, Mis' Williams and Mis' Atherton, an' hope ye'll be able to bear up under the jedgment o' the -Lord." In an aside to her sister, and holding her fan, ostrich-like, to her face, as a guard, she whispered, "There! ef I didn't fergit what Quintus telled me, th't 'twasn't proper to call married women 'Miss!' An' I snum, ef I didn't say it in spite o' him!"

Meanwhile the marshal had conducted the bearers up the centre aisle, to the space in front of the pulpit, where they deposited the coffins, Beals, thereafter, waving the custodians to seats in the deacons' pews at the right and the left of the open, where they would be in handy call for acts further on in the sad drama of the day. Beals's boots, that always squeaked, especially on funeral occasions, had in this march given evidence of quality equal to

the agony of a double funeral, and appropriate to the fact that their master was in official capacity. As he countermarched they seemed as if "well acquainted" with his ideas of the gradation of torture upward to the culmination of the solemnity, and still more intensified the excruciating sounds, as he again moved up the centre aisle, leading the mourners to their reserved seats. A bandanna which had dangled from a pocket of his blue and brass-buttoned swallow-tail, was now grasped in hand. And sighing in good order, he again countermarched, the faithful boots behaving in the admirable discipline appropriate to the progress of the programme of the solemn sitting. Reaching the entry, he surveyed the boys, "hired men," and less "forehanded" of the farmers, there huddled, and crowding the meeting-house steps and the yard in front, and still others who occupied seats in the buggies in the horse-sheds, that they might catch some of the coveted misery of the occasion which some of them had driven a dozen and even a full score of miles to feast upon. Then, to emphasize his grief,—for who shall say that Beals, with all his love for display of authority, did not sorrow that his neighbors were gone?—he blew, with the aid of the bandanna, a nasal blast that sounded throughout the meeting-house, to the horse-sheds and the nearer houses of the village. It was afterwards an accredited remark that one of the singers, Marion Belmont, had the audacity to whisper "out loud," "I wonder if that noise from Beals is the one told of in the hymn we are to sing, 'Hark, from

the tombs a doleful sound!" Of course they would sing that hymn, for had it not been rendered at the rehearsal on the Friday evening before? was it not always sung on such occasions? For could it not produce more terror, frighten more children, and quicker bring men and women to a "realizing sense of their condition as poor dying mortals" than any other piece of elegiac verse extant? It was the perfection of lachrymal lines, the standard of solemn psalmody. It excelled even the torture of Bildad's boots, that now once again announced that he was moving up the centre aisle. Other boots there were to squeak as well. Those of "Squintus" came next in degree of agony to those his father wore, while Nelson Barnes's squeaked a little less than those of "Squintus." And "Squintus" and Barnes, "leftenants" of Beals, now moved up the side aisles and took the stations assigned them with the bearers, while in an altar chair Bildad at last sat down and surveyed the assembly, the marshaling of which was the greatest achievement of his life. It exceeded in importance even the celebrations on the Fourth, whereat, as should have been previously stated, he was not only marshal but toast-master, the presidency at such celebrations going of course, without dispute, to Lemuel Barnes, selectman of Dayville.

There they were, in "order due and sad array," all seated according to station in life, Selectman Barnes and family, first after the Williams mourners. Mr. Thompson, the merchant, who was second selectman, with his family,

sat with a face a trifle less solemn and consequential than that of Barnes, while Third Selectman Bacon and family were in the next pew, displaying solemnity and importance graded down from that of the Thompsons. Widow Merwin and son, who "had property," supplemented the Bacons, and so the gradation ran down through the pews on that side of the broad aisle; while other families of distinction in Dayville society were arranged in order of rank from the Atherton mourners down through the pews on the opposite side of the aisle. In the most eligible of the remaining pews the ushers-in-ordinary had disposed people of distinction from adjoining towns. And if the courtesies shown lacked the perfection which would have been shown in seating them on the broad aisle, with the Dayville elite, the omission must be overlooked, in the first attempts of the youths to place a congregation on a day of such importance. In the rear of the auditorium, and filling the wall pews, were some of the general public, among whom were the Jones boys, who "worked out," the Crane boys who didn't work at all, a town pauper who was white, a town pauper who was black, a negro who was not a pauper, Mike Tobin and two other Irishmen, and Peter Piper, a half-witted *habitué* of Dayville, namesake, and, it is said, kindred of the one who is hero of the peppery and immortal song of the nursery. The women skilled at weeping were present, including Sally Simpkins, sister of Hetty Simpkins Atherton, and who wept almost to distraction. There, too, was Jeremiah Joslyn, who had in

prayer-meetings from time immemorial bemoaned "the backslidings of the children of Zion, whose harps were hung on the willows, down by the waters of Babylon." He had wailed to the entire satisfaction of Mr. Barber, conquering from him the frank admission, made to Mr. Barrett, that "Brother Joslyn is one of God's very elect," and winning from the average man of Dayville the distinction of being "the weeping prophet."

The marshal had noticed that Joslyn's boots squeaked, that day, but less than those he wore, and therefore they augmented, rather than eclipsed his glory. While those who excel a man in that which is his boast excite his jealousy and destroy his peace, those who imitate him add to his importance and heighten his enjoyment. This philosophy obtains even at funerals.

And now Beals raises his eyes to the gallery whose semi-circular throng waits, intent on the scene below. There beam the rosy features of sturdy "Judge" Jones, so dubbed because of ability to determine the quality of potations at the Dayville "tarvurn stand," which it is his delight to test. A marked figure in the crowd is the unkempt and "Cross-eyed" Crane, father of the Crane boys, who "makes baskets up to Scrabble Holler." "Ben" Keyes, the "hoss-trader," sits meditating, whether on the sad event which the proceedings are to emphasize, or the probabilities of his "striking a deal," with advantage to himself "after meetin'," does not appear. "Lem" Keyes is present, the cobbler who "whips the cat from house to

house." "Eb" Whitney, the one who placed the "utensils" of his name on an ax-handle, and who was eloquent of the view from the "pizarro" of his house, has come to attend the "obloquies!" And wood-choppers and coal-burners, from Scrabble Hollow and Brier Hill, add to the picturesqueness of the array.

Exchanging glances with his "leftenants," Bildad, as if to voice his approval, gives another nasal blast, caressingly folds the bandanna, places it on his knees, and looking up, gives an answering nod to the inquiring gaze of Mr. Barber, who, thereat, reads the regulation rhythmic wail above mentioned, all of the doleful stanzas of which the singers render to the mournful cadences of old "China." Then follows Solomon's "vanity of vanities," pronounced by the Hardland minister, who, as if the Deity needed information concerning the "mutability of all things earthly," proceeds for ten minutes to instruct the Throne on that subject, and then reads

"Our days are as the grass,
Or like the morning flower,"

which is given by the choir to the tune of "Bileston." The dirges done, Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber arises to his feet, with a gravity of mien that well substantiates his claim to the name of the stern theologian he bears, and begins a discourse in which is often repeated the complaint that "man is of few days and full of trouble." Other textual terror frequently occurs in the sermon, which runs up to the "twelfthly" and includes narration in full

of all the harrowing details of the great accident. Then, to complete the "application," which terminates an hour and a half of dolorousness, in which there is scarcely a word to give the bereaved a "glimmering ray of hope" concerning the good men who have gone, Mr. Barber reaches this perfection of patronizing: "Let us hope that although Esquire Williams had shown a great leaning toward the New Lights, he had space given him for repentance of the error of beginning to follow such a damning heresy, and that God in His sovereign mercy forgave him and allowed him to be saved, 'so as by fire.' There is perchance a possibility, also, that, although Mr. Atherton was strangely visionary and never engaged in any real work to enable him to get a living, and so disobeyed God's Holy Word that commands one to be diligent in business, he, too, may have been forgiven, at the eleventh hour, for the great sin of shiftlessness and for the added offence to Deity of holding doctrines counter to Holy Writ, and in God's boundless grace may have been admitted to a low place in heaven!"

The programme, from the opening of the doors for the concourse to gather, had now run through two hours and a half, and yet Mr. Barber did not think of omitting the closing hymn, which, after being read by Mr. Barrett, was sung through all its stanzas to remind the people

"How vain are all things here below."

The welcome benediction by Mr. Barber was followed by

his nod to the master of ceremonies, who arose, and, after a moment's pause, in which, as it proved, he was thinking of the caution given him by his son against mispronouncing words,—for instance, saying “ile” for oil,—announced that “the friends wishing to see the corpses of the *diseased* will pass up the right *oil* and down the left *oil*!” Evidence of dawning merriment on the faces of the more intelligent of the audience faded with thought of the solemnity of the hour, and Beals's self conceit blinded him to the fact that he had made a great blunder, while Marion Belmont in the singers' seats was too far removed for him to hear her disgusted whisper—“The fool!”

A full half-hour was occupied in viewing the remains, and the bearers, under conduct of Beals, whose boots held out bravely in their faithfulness, carried the coffins to the hearses in waiting; and, the mourners having been conducted to the buggies assigned them next in order, and others coming into line under the direction of Beals's deputies, the procession, headed by the marshal himself in a carriage with the ministers, moved slowly to the “graveyard,” a half-mile out on the Ridgeway road.

The place chosen for the burial of Atherton was near the family lot of Esquire Williams, and so it was convenient that both interments should be attended by the same closing ceremonies. The coffins were simultaneously lowered by the respective sets of bearers, when Beals threw, as was the custom of those days, a few spades of dirt into each grave. Amid the shuddering at the rattling

of the gravel on the boxes, came the "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," pronounced in tones of the sternest gravity, by Mr. Barrett and followed with his prayer, asking that "the people may profit by this judgment of the Lord, and that, before others are removed by the grim monster, they may be better prepared than it is feared were these two, for standing in the presence of Thy dread and awful Majesty!" At this climax of agony Jeremiah Joslyn gave fresh and copious proof of his right to the sobriquet that distinguished him; Sally Simpkins wept as never before; and Hetty Simpkins Atherton was "clean broke down," as Sally afterwards acknowledged to Mr. Barber's wife, while Mrs. Bildad Beals and her spinster sister outdid all the other women at weeping.

As the people left the "burying-ground" the two farm hands of Selectman Barnes joined each other, and this colloquy gives their ideas of the great event of the day:—

"I'll be consarned to kingdom come, and back agin, ef that air Barber an' that air Barrett, them 'twin priests,' as the boys call 'em, haint outdid theirselves in keepin' folks furever an' furever more to a fun'ral. Priest Barber was allus longer nor the way round ole Barnes's funder keow-pastur', but this ere puts on the cap-sheaf."

"An' bedad, Bill Joanes, it's thrue fur ye, an' ef me praste hayers o' me 'tendin' the fun'ral, I guess he'll be aisy on me, seein' I've hed thrubble 'nough fur me sins av a wake."

"Wall, there, Mike, we'll hev to be hurryin' about them

air chores 'o ourn, milkin' 'Old Yaller', an' 'Lop Horn' an' that grizzly heffer thet's so hard to milk, an' tother half dozen, an' feedin' the pigs an calves, an' fetchin' in the wood fur the back kitchen. What a lot o' chores old Barnes has, anyway,—'nuff ter keep one feller stiddy to work 'thout liftin' a hand to anythin' else."

"Bill Joanes, yer right, an' shure; but, fur the loife o' me, I can't see th't ye give yer imployer a divil o' bit o' respect, an' shure, Bill Joanes."

"Ah, Mike Tobin, I ain't afraid o' old Barnes."

But Bill didn't tell or hint the reason for lack of reverence that so puzzled his fellow laborer, but remarked,

"Mike, they say Lem Keyes got an extra half dollar fur puttin' the squeak inter them air boots o' Bildad's; an' 'twan't any too much, nuther, jedgin' by the saw-flin' screech Bildad made. I swannee, 't'll take more 'n a half dozen times singin' 'Swanee River' by—wall, I aint a goin' to tell you, Mike, who 'tis—more'n a half a dozen times to git my feelin's smoothed out agin."

"It's throe fur ye, Bill Joanes; but fwhy would ye be disthrustin' the loikes o' honest Mike Tobin? thet ye'd withould the name o' yer gerril, an' shure, Bill Joanes? The divil a bit would Mike Tobin disturb ye an' yer honey, shure."

"Wall, Mike, we'll hev ter line it fur old Barnes's."

Some of this colloquy was overheard by Peter Jones and Samuel Nason, the meek and discreet deacons of

the Dayville church, who, shocked with the irreverence of Bill Jones, thus freed their minds:—

“Well, Brother Nason, how irreverent for that man Jones to speak so lightly of one of the elected.”

“You’re right, Brother Jones; and it seems as if some of our young men were jest possessed.”

“And it stands us in hand to gird up our loins with righteousness and be a pattern to the people in all good words and works.”

“Verily, Brother Jones.”

“And let us pray that this solemnizing time have its desired and designed effect on the prayerless ones of our Zion, and that they be brought to a realizing sense of their condition as poor dyin’ mortals and unworthy worms of the dust.”

“You’re always right, Brother Jones.”

This account of the occasion, which gives so much prominence to ministers and marshal, and which was, in a sense peculiarly grateful to them, “their funeral,” is hitherto unmarred by mention of those they did not care to see, but whose names may come in as addenda. One of these was Esquire Albert Belmont, father of the outspoken singer of the Dayville choir. Another was Dr. Johnson the Dayville physician. Samuel Taylor, the miller of the Cross-roads neighborhood, was there with Mrs. Taylor; Mr. Harrison quit his briefs at his Wayfield office, to pay his respects to the memory of his brother magistrate, and was accompanied by his neighbor Deacon

Payson Sherwood; and Mr. Jameson, whose frightened horse was the cause of the tragedy, came with his wife. These, drawn by mutual liking, came in company from the burial to the house of their departed friend, Mr. Williams, to condole with the bereaved. At the suggestion of Mr. Belmont, the Wayfield jurist voiced the sympathy of the group:—

“We come to tell you, Mrs. Williams, of our great respect for the one who is gone, of our sympathy for you in the sorrow that has darkened your days, and of our belief that you will bravely endure the grief to which you have been brought by the great calamity that has shocked us all and robbed you of the partner of your life. Assuring you of the sincerity of our professions, and asking you to regard us all as your friends, we will leave you to the sacredness of your sorrow.”

As Harrison started homeward on the Wayfield road, a villager was standing in the door of the “back store” of Mr. Thompson, who heard the lawyer say,—

“Friend Sherwood, if that bigotry, sanctimoniousness and utter disregard of the feelings of the sorrowing—that accumulation of assumption of superiority over one’s fellow men and irreverence for God—if there is a God—if this is religion, I want none of it. And if it goes unrebuked of God—if there is a God—I shall think there is no God! Why, Sherwood, the principles of infidels teach them better manners than such an insult of patronizing as that with which Mr. Barber and his fit associate heaped the

programme of an occasion which ought to have been characterized at least by the considerateness of the speech of gentlemen !”

“Harrison, you are right, and I, who am a member of the standing order, tell you that such performances as those which have blotted this beautiful June day which God sent as emblematic of the mercy of Him who is kind even when he sorely afflicts—that such performances do more to hinder the advancement of true religion than the faithful can in a long time counteract.”

“Sherwood, I always thought you sensible. And, by the way, how would your minister, Rev. Dr. Robinson, regard such authoritativeness and conceit? He is too sensible to countenance such egotism, is he not, even if he is a brother minister of what you so fittingly call the ‘standing order’ who perpetrates it?”

“Of course he is. And he will be quite likely to hear of the high-handed way of his brother clergymen. You know his opinions count among the ministers of his denomination.”

The dialogue was continued through the drive to Wayfield, and as the manner of the “twin priests” at the funeral became known in that town it awakened not a little criticism.

Mrs. Taylor remained with Mrs. Williams for the night, to cheer her, in her loneliness, and remarked as Mr. Taylor drove away,

“Please stop and tell Mrs. Smith that I’m here—the

dear, good woman, how faithfully she'll watch by her husband."

Of course "the funeral" was the chief topic, before and after the meeting, on Sunday, and, of course, there was an impromptu conference in front of the meeting-house at noon. Mr. Barnes, Bildad Beals and the deacons were not present to participate. They were wanted at the parsonage where Mr. Barber, speaking in an undertone that meant "keep it dark," thus made known a project of his:—

"Brethren, works of mercy and necessity are in keeping with the solemnity of the Lord's day, and I thought it necessary to apprise you of my fears lest the strange doctrines of the New Lights should get so much headway as to be beyond control, and to ask you, brethren, to be present with me at the meeting which that pretender, Peters, is going to hold, up at the Cross-roads school-house, on Tuesday evening. He ought to be silenced."

"You are eminently wise, Brother Barber," said Mr. Barnes, "I will be there to assist you, and I presume the others will be ready to help."

The "others" assented, for they dared not do otherwise.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MEETING AT THE CROSS-ROADS.

AT the appointed time the Cross-roads school-house was filled to its utmost capacity of sittings and standing room, and many gathered outside, to hear through the open door and windows. Lighted by candles stuck in tallow on bits of shingles tacked on desks and window-sills, the meeting-place, with its company of plain people, animated by curiosity that was evident on every face, presented a scene that was indeed picturesque. Elder Peters, who had arrived at the Smith farm-house an hour before meeting-time, now came in and seated himself at the teacher's desk. He placed thereon his hymn-book and Bible, and there bowed his head for a moment of prayer.

At the farm-house there had been a conversation between Agnes and her mother, which explains itself:—

“Mamma, didn’t thu thay onth that flowerth tell Godth thoughth of kindness to uth, thuth the same ath if He thpoke to uth in wordth?”

“Yes, my child; but why do you speak of this now?”

“Why, mamma, thu thee, Mithter Peterth will be telling uth in wordth thum of Godth thoughth of kindneth to

uth, and not be telling about 'decreeth, foreor——'
mamma, what ith that word?"

"Foreordination, you mean."

"Yeth, 'foreordination, elected to be thaved, elected to be damned,' and that about thum children going to Heaven and otherth mutht be burnt up even if they die before they re old enough to underthtand about Jethuth—thothe thingth that Mithter Barber preacheth."

"You're right, my child; I do not think Mr. Peters will talk about those things. He is likely to say something about what he calls 'glad tidings of salvation.'"

"That will be God'th kindneth to uth, won't it mamma?"

"Certainly, my child."

"Well, mamma, I thought 'twould be tho good to have thum of God'th thought of kindneth in flowerth near Mithter Peterth when he ith telling uth Godth thought of kindneth in wordth. The more thuch thought we have the better."

"Agnes, you precious one, it is a beautiful idea you have. And you wish to carry some flowers to meeting, do you?"

"Yeth, mamma."

"Flowers at meeting will be a new thing, but it will be a good thing."

"And we'll have thum flower.h for papa, too."

One of two vases filled with marigolds, sweet peas and striped grass was placed by the couch of the father, the

mother whispering as she held it for him to inhale the fragrance,

“Dearest, mine, that noble Agnes of ours is just like her father. She wished me to bring these to you.”

“The precious one—and who gave her to me!”

The other vase, Agnes, accompanied by Mrs. Wilcutt, carried to the school-house, and placed upon the desk before Mr. Peters, just as he lifted his eyes to survey the company. Reading the hymn,

“Come, Thou fount of every blessing,
Tune our hearts to sing Thy grace,”

he thus supplemented the lines:—

“Brethren, how good the Lord is, to give us such a beautiful world, with its shining rivers emblematic of the waters of life, birds whose song suggests the harmonies of Heaven, and flowers,”—and the speaker lifted the vase before him to inhale the fragrance—“and flowers to remind us of those blooming on the eternal hills!”

Preacher and people joined heartily in singing the stanzas to the tune of Nettleton. Then, for a moment bowing his head as if studying some thought that had suddenly come to him, Mr. Peters arose and, looking benignly down to Agnes, said,

“Does the little girl before me who brought these flowers know that God made them? and does she wish to love that good Being? and the Christ whom He sent into this world to save people from their sins? And will she believe in the Great Father above, and be saved through

Christ who said, 'Suffer the little ones to come unto me'? I know the dear little girl wishes to love God and follow Jesus. Will she be a brave child, and just now in the morning of her life bear the cross for that One who died on the cross for her? He rose again, and He is in Heaven, where He is waiting to see her brave enough to tell these people she loves Him. Will Agnes be the brave one He asks her to be?"

And the preacher's voice increased in tenderness, and the benignity of his face became radiance as the child, disengaging her hand from that of the woman by her side, arose and said,

"Mithter Peters, I do want to love Jethuth."

"Dear girl," said the preacher, "He will bless you, He does bless you."

"Yeth, He duth."

"Thank God for that testimony, which I would believe against a world to the contrary! And," said the itinerant, a sudden thought lighting his features, "is there not another here who will, with this child, begin the new life?"

Mrs Wilcutt quietly arose and was followed by several others. One of these was Thomas Stedman, "Terrible Tom," as he had been named because of his ability and his liking to "whip anything that came along." Penitents and preacher knelt as he spoke with Heaven in their behalf. The group arising from their knees, he asked any conscious of God's blessing them in their act, to acknow-

ledge it by rising to their feet. All responded, Agnes first; whereat the man of God exclaimed, "And a little child shall lead them!" and began singing,

"Angels now are hovering 'round us."

Then quoting the words,—“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” he discoursed from it, emphasizing in his remarks the word “all” :—

“The child, the man of mature years, those who have led respectable lives and those who have been a trouble to their neighbors and a disgrace to themselves, those who accept the proffered blessings before they have often grieved the Spirit, and those who are so unwise as to wait until the eleventh hour of their lives—to these, to all of these, the Master says ‘Come unto me and I will give you rest.’ Not one class is taken and another left, not one is elected to be saved and the other predestined to eternal damnation, but *all* are invited, and to *all* He will give rest.”

Elder Peters, though a man of great earnestness, was not given to controversy. Yet he could not have uttered words more likely than were these to awaken the ire of a minister of the standing order. And, unknown to the itinerant, such a minister was present. It was the veritable Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber, who occupied a seat in a corner, where he was surrounded by Selectman Barnes, Deacon Jones and Deacon Nason, Bill Jones, a

tythingman, and Bildad Beals. This last named worthy was clad in blue and brass, and was evidently inflated with the consciousness of his recent achievements and honors. The first intimation that Mr. Peters had of the presence of Barber and his men was this sudden interruption by the Dayville minister:—

“I demur against these proceedings, which, under the name of worship of God, are such that I must denounce them as blasphemy! Here we have the spectacle of a man pretending to be called of God to preach, and yet sanctioning a child’s bringing flowers to a religious meeting, thus leading the people to ‘worship the creature instead of the Creator!’ This man pretending to be a minister has the effrontery to say that those who are ‘born in sin and conceived in iniquity’ can be saved and begin a Christian life in so short a time as one candle-light meeting. Presuming still further, he scoffs at one of the fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures that is taught in all our churches, the good and helpful doctrine, that God in His wisdom has chosen some for seats in His kingdom and others He has from all eternity decreed to be cast out forever! This pretender assumes that children of unelected parents can be saved in infancy, and here furnishes an illustration of his heresy in the case of the child Agnes, daughter of one tainted with the dangerous and unsound doctrine of the New Lights. I protest against further proceedings of this kind. Being the minister of the gospel in this parish, which includes

the Cross-roads district, I forbid the New Light speaker from further utterance; and I shall call on Sheriff Beals and his posse to sustain me."

Turning towards the itinerant, Barber said, looking with the severity of a judge and increasing the iron-like quality of his voice:—

"Mr. Peters, will you accept this rebuke and cease your ranting? If not, you shall suffer the provisions of the law for public blaspheming, of which I pronounce you guilty!"

There was a stillness as of death as Mr. Peters, calmly turning his face toward the irate Barber, said:—

"I will *not* accept the rebuke, for I do not deserve it. And, God helping me, I shall not cease to speak in the name of Christ wherever I may be invited to speak by any of the good people of the Wayfield circuit, which also 'includes the Cross-roads district'! And, sir, denouncing me though you do, as a blasphemer, I yet have that respect for this place and this hour, and for the name of the Master who taught His disciples to suffer rather than do violence, that respect which leads me to refrain from fitly describing your abuse. Yet abuse I must call it, if I keep the spirit of a man within me. But from my heart I pray God, for the sake of the Christ I love, to forgive you. You and all yours I wish but good. Nothing have I said to make myself personally obnoxious to you. But, sir, speak I will the words I am moved to say."

Not to be defeated, Mr. Barber turned to his helpers with:—

"Mr. Barnes, see that this man is put out of the house! Wait, however, till I say the word. Mr. Peters, do you persist?"

"I most certainly do."

Mr. Barber evidently had a new thought, and he took the vase of flowers from the desk and started for the door to throw it out. And the itinerant bowed his head on the desk, and in quiet earnestness of voice prayed, "God help me." Help did come, and that in the person of none other than "Terrible Tom," who arose to his feet and thundered:—

"Priest Barber, you let them air flowers alone! I'll give you one half-minute to set that crockery down on that air desk, or I may forgit my promise not to fight any more. An' you can bet yer life, if Tom Stedman gits his blood up, you'll have your hands full, 'foreordained an' elected,' an' all the rest, if you air!"

Not accustomed to interference, and from habit thinking himself master of this as he was of every situation, Barber remained motionless where he had been halted by the backwoods athlete, until Tom again commanded,

"Put them air flowers on that air desk instanter!"

And seconding his orders by drawing up his sleeves and striding towards the "priest," Tom brushed aside the hands of Barnes and his men, that were stretched to clutch him, and stood squarely in front of the preacher to prevent his exit by the door. Glowering at the astounded parson, Stedman again commanded,

“Drop them air flowers or *I’ll drop you!*”

Reluctantly turning, Barber placed the vase on the desk; and Stedman patronizingly addressed him:—

“There, now, it’s a purty sayin’ ef a little girl can’t bring posies to a meetin’ and a preacher kind o’ put ’em into his sermon without bein’ molested. You ought ter have more manners ’n to raise a row in other folks’s meetin’s. Why don’t you go to your own gospel-shop ’n speechify? Jest ’cause you couldn’t git a baker’s dozen to hear your stuff. An’ more’n all, it seems to me ’t my poor dead mother once read sunthin’ out o’ the Bible ’bout considerin’ the lilies, and that’s what these flowers is here for. Ain’t that so, Mr. Peters?”

“I think it is.”

“And,” Tom continued, “’twon’t be well, Priest Barber, for you, or any other man, or a dozen like ye, to tackle Mr. Peters, in or out o’ meetin’; for ‘about these days,’ as the alminic says, Tom Stedman thinks a heap sight more of Elder Peters than he used to, and Tom knows enough about Scriptur’ to know that if the Bible does say that when a feller strikes ye on one cheek ye must turn to him ’tother also, there aint nothin’ said about lettin’ yer friends git hit on either cheek. And Mr. Peters, allowin’ he’s willin’, is one o’ Tom Stedman’s friends. And Tom hopes sometime to be good enough to be one of the kind that Peters is, though grace has got a big work to do, Tom Stedman allows. And if Elder Peters will let him, Tom will tell how it all came about.”

The preacher, thinking that his defender would say something that would be pertinent if it was picturesque, nodded his assent.

Mr. Barber had resumed his seat, and Barnes had not the egotism to suppose that he was able to cope with Tom, and was evidently strengthened in his conclusions to let Tom alone by the fact that he noticed one or two others whom he thought to be Tom's friends who would delight to "make a meal of a fellow about Barnes's size," as one of them whispered to another, "but I guess Tom won't need any of our help,—if he does, here's what's goin' in." And so Mr. Lemuel Barnes, "selectman of Dayville, fore-ordained," etc., sat as meek as a lamb in a precinct of a town where he supposed himself supreme. And Tom proceeded with his "experience":—

"Well, ye see, friends, one time last spring when I come from choppin', on the mountains, over beyond Wayfil', I hearn tell that Elder Peters was a-goin' to have a meetin' over to Scrabble Holler, a mile from my mother's house. Poor woman, my ways 'most broke her heart and she's dead now, and I tell ye, Mr. Peters, it kind o' gits me, to think how she prayed for me. It's no use to be hangin' back, an' I've got to come into 'the fold' for her sake. Well, ye see, when I hearn o' that meetin' I telled Bill Andrews, that was kinder a chum o' mine, purty light-footed an' able to run, while he 'lowed that I could do the stand-up-and-knock-em-down part of the business, that we'd have some fun that night; that when Elder Peters went home a-horse-

back we'd jest step out of a place back of the hemlocks, down there in that long stretch of road beyond Scrabble Holler, an' make him hold another meetin' by the roadside an' preach us a sermon from a text that we'd give him, an' have him stand on a rock fur his pulpit. Well, we wuz there waitin' fur him, an' when he come along, Bill stepped out kind o' nimble, follered by me, and Bill sed, 'Ole Peters, you stop,'—and grabbed the horse's reins. And that air preacher sot there as cool as a cowcumber and telled us th't we must let him go along, for he'd got to be about his Master's business. 'No,' sez I, Bill still holding the straps, 'you've got to be about our business now.' 'Let me go,' said Peters; but Bill still hung to the luther and I told Peters 'twas no use, he'd got to git down off that air horse. But I'd no sooner spit out them air words than that preacher struck such an all-fired blow between Bill's eyes, that Bill, he give one screamin' yell, and with his hands on his eyes, cut sticks for home, the best he knew, leavin' me to fight it out with the parson. And Peters didn't let much space o' period come a-tween that side-winder on Bill's eyes and his lightin' down of'n his horse with his hand a-hold o' my throat and me a-fallin' flop in the road, and him skyward to me. 'Now Tom Stedman,' sez he, 'blessed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight,' or sunthin' like that. And sez he, 'Tom, I'll let ye up when ye promise me that ye'll never merlest a Methodist preacher agin in all yer life.' 'Nary a promise,' sez I, 'Tom Stedman don't knock

under.' 'Then,' said he, a-tightenin' his grip that he'd kinder loosed up on, 'you may find that Elder Peters belongs to the church militant and also to the church triumphant.' An' I tried an' tried to git away from Peters, but 'twasn't no use, an' I said, 'Elder, ye've got me, an' I guess I'll have to strike my colors; and now, Parson, what's yer terms o' surrender?' And he said, 'Promise me ye'll never merlest a preacher on this or any other circuit, and that ye'll read yer Bible every day, allowin' for time that ye're sick, and say the Lord's prayer and try to lead a better life.' 'Well,' sez I, 'that's fair, but how about the Lord's prayer? My mother would ha' teeched me, but I never would learn that, and I don't hardly know how to read.' 'Well,' said he, 'now Tom, sit up here and I'll teech ye the Lord's prayer;' and he began, 'Our Father,' and went on through the rest on it, I follerin' in the path, though it was a new road for me and I kinder stumbled. An' then he said over some verses he said was a hymn, suthin' about a soldier of a cross, an' I must 'fight if I would reign.' Then he made me kneel down, an' he prayed. So, ye see, Tom Stedman and Elder Peters had a meetin', but Peters was boss instid o' Tom Stedman. And now, folks, I've been a-thinkin' o' this matter a long time, and the more I thought on it the more I felt like sayin', 'Tom, jest turn round now and make a man o' yourself.' With that idee I come up here, havin' heard o' this meetin'. When Peters axed em to stan' up for Jesus, I said, 'Tom Stedman, that's you,' and I riz right up, and

I meant it. But it takes a good deal o' grace to keep a feller's temper, and when Priest Barber went to orderin' folks around, where it wasn't his meetin', I thought I'd not only stan' up for Jesus but fur Elder Peters, too. Barber's dried up now, an' I guess things'll be all right."

The woodman's speech needed not an "application," and the itinerant, seeing his opportunity to return to the theme with which he had begun the services, said :—

"My friends, God is indeed good, to give us such a beautiful world. And I thank this child for bringing her offering to the house of the Lord. Let me predict that her act, the first of the kind, I venture to say, ever done in this region, will not be the last by many; that her bringing flowers to the place of prayer will be copied again and again. So shall be fulfilled the scripture, 'A little child shall lead them.'" Lowering his voice to the sweetest tenderness, he said, "Will Agnes come to me?" Encouraged by the winsome tones, the girl stepped before the desk and whispered, as she looked up to the kind face, "Yeth thir," and Peters continued :—

"It must have been vexing to you to see a man rudely take those flowers to throw them away. You were hurt at heart, and I think Jesus felt hurt, too. Not for the flowers; for He is in heaven, where rarer flowers bloom than ever sweetened the zephyrs of earth—but He was grieved to see a man offend a child. Yet He did not hate that man, but hated his wrong-doing. He loves that man,

for He loves all men. And now, He asks you to forgive the man."

"It ith pretty hard, Mithter Peterth," said Agnes sobbing.

"Yes, I know it, but Jesus asks it. Will you do it?"

"Yeth, I will," and the great tears told of the tenderness of the wounded heart, that, touched by the spirit of the Master, could forgive one who had wronged her.

And the good man took her up gently in his arms, where she sobbed aloud. Touched to tears and to silence by this scene, the audience waited, with reverence and respect evident on every face. Even that of Mr. Barber showed for a time an apparent approach to tenderness, which, however, soon gave place to his native severity.

When Agnes had joined Mrs. Wilcutt, Elder Peters began another colloquy:—

"Will Mr. Stedman come here?"

"Yes, Elder Peters." And the tall man came forward, extending his hand and saying, "Glad to see you, Elder Peters; and ready for anything you ax me."

"You have told how you promised that you would begin to lead a better life, and I believe you have kept your word. You have read your Bible as well as you could and have said the Lord's prayer, have you?"

"Not as often as I ought to, but a good many times since I p̄mised."

"Now you have said you came here to begin to be a better man."

"I was one o' them that riz for prayers."

"By that act you asked God to forgive you."

"I did."

"And he declares that if we want to be forgiven we must forgive our enemies, those that offend us, as Mr. Barber offended you and the little girl."

"Is that in the Book, too?"

"It is."

"Well, 'twas rather hard to ask a little girl to forgive a big man what took the flowers that she sot such a store by that she would fetch 'em to meetin', but she forgived him like a little lady. And I s'pose you're thinkin' the likes o' me ought to do as much as a little girl and forgive Priest Barber, too."

"That's it, Mr. Stedman."

"Well, Elder Peters, it would ha' been nuff sight easier for Tom Stedman to thrash Priest Barber and the fellers what came to help him than to forgive 'em. But if I must I must, an'—an'—an'—I—well, Tom Stedman, this is the toughest fight yet; but here goes, and here, Elder Peters, is my hand, from this out."

"And I know you mean it all. You thrashed the Devil by conquering yourself enough to forgive Mr. Barber. And by that conquering you developed the power for self-control, which is one of the best elements of character, and you have fulfilled your part of the obligations that give God the opportunity to keep his word and forgive you, and I know He will keep His word."

"Why, Elder Peters, it seems 's ef He has already. Leastwise, Tom Stedman never felt so well in his life."

"Of course He forgives you now. It doesn't take God long to do His work when we fulfill our part."

And thus, quick to see his opportunity, did the man of God preach Christ and give an illustration of the doctrines of the gospel.

Tom Stedman, whom the standing order regarded as a reprobate, "elected to eternal damnation," had really manly qualities, such as are the foundation for a grand character. Though known as a fighter and dreaded as the terror of the region, he never attacked the defenseless, and the worst pounding he ever gave anyone, and the only "punishment" he had inflicted in a long time was administered to pay the fellow for an assault on a helpless old man. An act or word that wounded the feelings of the sensitive would touch Tom to the quick and enlist him in defense. He was a man of clean lips and of respect for women. His new experience, especially exercising the spirit of forgiveness, awakened his better self to that growth which is sure promise of high fruition.

After noting a list of names of those wishing to join a class, and appointing a meeting for the next Tuesday evening, Elder Peters pronounced the benediction, and left the Cross-roads school-house with the neighbors who were going in the direction of his lodgings. Two of the people who had been getting acquainted with each other,

were Agnes Smith and the wood-chopper. Shying up to him she said :—

“Tom Thtedman, they thay thuthe been a naughty man. But thuthe going to be better. It wath real good in thu to thtop Mithter Barber from thwoing thothe flowerth away. And I’m glad thu forgave him.”

This was too much for the man, and, acting up to the best impulses of his heart, he caught the child in his arms and kissed her, saying, “No wonder some one said in the Bible, suffer the likes o’ ye to come unto Him. May Tom Stedman be your friend as long as he is good?”

“Thu may.”

“Tom Stedman will; and he hopes to live so you will not be ashamed of him.”

When, just as the group neared the Smith house, Mrs. Wilcutt came up to resume charge of Agnes, and hastily took the girl’s hand and walked ahead of the company, she had no thought of rudeness, but her admiration for Tom was so much that she did not wish to manifest it in his presence. As the group were tarrying at the door, to learn from one of their number the condition of Mr. Smith, Agnes, who had disengaged herself from Mrs. Wilcutt, came up to Stedman, saying, “Where do thu live?”

“Over most to Scrabble Holler, in an old house mother lived in. An’ I oughter fixed it up afore she died.”

“It mutht be too fur for thu to go there to-night.”

“It’s ten miles, little one.”

Then springing up the steps, into the house, Agnes whispered to her mother,

"Tom Thtedman livth ten mileth off, and I with he could thtay here; but all the roomth will be full."

Stedman, who had divined the child's errand, entered the door, saying, "It *is* too far for me to go to Scrabble Holler, to-night, an' ef your father has a buffalo robe and has some hay in the barn, I'll stay there, and talk with the stars that I'll see shinin' through, tellin' me of God and those you call angels."

"Stay and welcome," said Mr. Smith, "and be sure you come in for breakfast."

"Good-night, little girl, an' all you folks—" and Tom was soon in the barn repeating the Lord's prayer as a prelude to his talk with the stars.

"How would you like to come and do my farm work, Tom?" said Mr. Smith the next morning. "We will treat you well here. I must have some one to work for me, for the fates have fixed me so that I can do nothing."

"I ruther think I'd like to work for you; an' here, I shall be purty likely to be rid o' them fellers down thar to Scrabble Holler, and p'r'aps that's your idee in askin' me. So I'll be up here next week, bright 'n airly Monday mornin'. An' here's wishin' ye good-bye an' quick mendin' that broken leg o' yourn."

In the discussion of the all-absorbing topic of the meeting of the New Lights, great prominence was given the

discomfiture of Mr. Barber in his attempts to silence Elder Peters. This was anything but pleasant to the minister of the standing order, and he thought to retaliate by prosecuting the itinerant for unlawful meetings and teaching heresy. Accompanied by Selectman Barnes, Mr. Barber called on Esquire Albert Belmont for warrants for the arrest of the Wesleyan preacher and his convert. Mr. Belmont, who was the justice remaining to Dayville after the death of Esquire Williams, was regarded as having "a mind of his own," and showed it, by declining to comply with their request for a precept. On hearing the refusal, Mr. Barnes said:—

"You remember that note of five hundred dollars, the note with the mortgage on the pasture? It would be difficult for you to raise the money; the note will be due very soon, and that lot would be a fine addition to my farm!"

Looking, as if for assurance, to his daughter and confidant, the justice replied:—

"Sir, you have gone altogether too far! The attempt to intimidate a magistrate clearly makes you amenable to the law. Yet, wishing to take no undue advantage of you, I will copy the excellent Elder Peters and forgive you for this instance of insolence, which, if repeated, I shall rebuke with a fine for both offences."

Though hindered in their purpose, Barber and his man could not yet give it up, and that very day drove to Wayfield in quest of the coveted papers. One magistrate, to

whom they appeared, frankly avowed his belief in the New Light doctrine and his liking for Elder Peters. The commission of another magistrate had expired, and the last resort was Esquire Harrison, who not only refused the desired warrant, but who, when his visitors had gone, remarked to his clerk :—

“Jameson, if what I have learned is correct, there *was* some law-breaking done at that meeting at the Cross-roads, and the offender is not Elder Peters, but the very man who seeks his prosecution. Make out a warrant for signing and I’ll carry it to Peters and see if he will consent to the prosecution of his persecutors. It’s little I care for New Lights or standing order, but I do care for justice, and I confess to a liking for that preacher Mr. Peters, because of his manliness and evident sincerity.”

When, the next day, Mr. Harrison called on the itinerant, at his lodgings at Smith’s, and proposed legal interference in his behalf, pointing out to him, also, the abundance of proof of Barber’s disturbing a religious meeting, Mr. Peters replied :—

“You are right, Mr. Harrison, and I thank you for the interest you manifest in me by your offer to prosecute Mr. Barber. But I guess we’ll forgive him. The very fact of your coming to me with this errand will give me encouragement, and when, in time, your visit becomes, through others than myself—and I shall never speak of it—when it becomes known to the people it will heighten their estimate of me. And let us hope that no disturbance of the

kind caused by Mr. Barber happens again. My refusing to accept your kind proffer will be in keeping with the doctrine of forgiveness which, at my asking, two of those who attended the meeting illustrated on the spot. One of them was Mr. Stedman, who publicly forgave Mr. Barber after he, Stedman, had by his peculiar methods, restored order. The other was Agnes Smith, the little girl, who brought to the meeting an offering of flowers, one of the features of the occasion which incensed the Dayville minister."

"What, any man cruel enough to dislike the beautiful act of a child bringing flowers to a meeting! And Tom Stedman, who could have whipped Barber and a dozen others, the man who so delighted in 'regulating' things with his fists, this man who could have driven the whole company from the house, he forgave one who had offended him?"

"Verily, Mr. Harrison; and Mr. Stedman is going to be a different man."

"He always would keep his word. Once he told me if I would not issue a warrant for his arrest he would come to my office and settle for a little affair wherein the other man was the most to blame; and Tom came around on time, when he might have absconded. I believed in him; the belief did him good, and he honored my trust in him. I will never call him 'Tom' again, but Mr. Stedman."

"That is right; addressing him as Mr. Stedman is

saying, without saying, that he is entitled to respect and that you wish to accord him that respect."

"Just how came the issue at the meeting?"

"Mr. Barber undertook to throw the vase of flowers out of doors, which, of course, wounded the feelings of the child who brought them. The cruelty touched the manly heart of Stedman and he ordered the minister to desist and made him do it. After a little, acting up to the impulse of the moment, I asked the little girl, and then Stedman, to forgive the intruder; and, one after the other, they did. This, you see, was illustrating the teachings of the Master, who said 'Love thine enemy.' Should I not act in keeping with the spirit which I ask others to exhibit?"

"Your teachings are indeed beautiful, and the effect can be only good. Your practice is consistent with your preaching. Your religion, as you call it, or philosophy, as I should term it, is indeed admirable. I can but commend your course, and if you ever need more friends than you have, call on Andrew M. Harrison."

Conscious of the increasing importance of the religious situation at Dayville and vicinity, the loquacious farm hand of Barnes's, on entering the potato-field, of a morning, soon after the Cross-roads meeting, thus exclaimed over the latest developments:—

"By the seven-fold shield of Ajax, the great horn spoons of Noo Hampshear, and kingdom come! I'll be gol darned to Texas an' back agin ef ——"

And Mike Tobin, who had been at work an hour before his associate arrived, dropped his hoe and rushed up to him, exclaiming, in mingled wonder and merriment:—

“An’ fwat is it, Bill Joanes? Yer flourishes is so long I didn’t know but ye’d bust, an’ shure; an’ I thought, ’pon me sowl, I’d hev ter prevint an accidint; bedad, an’ I did!”

“No, Mike; but I’ll be blasted to blazes ef that air Priest Barber an’ ole Barnes ——”

“Bill Joanes, ye’d bether be more rispictful to yer imployer, bedad, Bill Joanes.”

“Ah, Mike, I aint afeared uv ole Barnes. An’ as I wuz sayin’, ef Priest Barber an’ ole Barnes haven’t ben to swear out the dockeymuntz ter ’rest Elder Peters fer holdin’ unlawful meetin’s an’ publicly teechin’ heresy, an’ to ’rest Tom Stedman fer ‘salt’ by timurdation! though what timurdation means I don’t know. I hearn thet they fust tried ter get the dockeymuntz fer takin’ Peters fer unlawful meetin’s and teechin’ what-do-ye-call it an’ Tom fer ‘salt an’ butter’; but Square Belmont said thet ef Tom didn’t tech any one there was no ‘butter’ ’bout it an’ ’twas all ‘salt,’ ef ’twas anythin’. An’ thet Peters hadn’t teeht anythin’ bad nor held meetin’s agin the law, An’ he thought he’d not gin ’em the dockeymuntz ’t all, fer ’restin’ fer heresy, er ‘salt,’ er ‘butter.’ An’ thet Priest Barber blustered up sunthin’ ’bout encroachin’ on the prorogatives of the watchman of Zine wouldn’t be thought well on in the churches. An’ Barnes, he, undertook to play a game o’ bluff. But the square, he, didn’t budge er inch.

So Priest Barber an' the ole man went over ter Wayfil', ter git the dockeymuntz from one o' the squares there. Two on 'em refused p'int blank, one 'cause he'd let his kurmission run aout, an' t'other 'cause he didn't like the idee uv the thing. An' when the Priest an' the guv'ner come ter Square Harrison, thet feller drew hisself up an' said Priest Barber'd orter be in better bizness thun stirrin' up strife 'mong his nabers. An' ef them air two fellers didn't come back from Wayfil' with heads daown, then Bill Jones haint no good at guessin'."

"Is that so? An' I hayered Barber made a hape o' fuss about a little gerrl hevin' some fluers to meetin'; an' shure fwat harrum was there in fluers at the meetin'?"

"Well, I'll be blamed, Mike Tobin, ef I dont venture a V thet Peters is comin' aout ahead in the hul bizness. Yer see, when the ole man an' Barber'd gone frum Square Harrison's, the square thort it over, an' started with the papers fer havin' both on 'em 'rested, instid o' the New Light man, ef he would say the word. An' though the square urged that air preacher to put the two fellers through an' tole him the right wuz on his side, he wouldn't take the law on 'em, an' fergived 'em there an' then. That's doin' good ter yer enemies, sartin sure. An' nobody ken say thet Peters is takin' 'vantage of any one."

"An' shure, Paters is a dacint man, thin, bedad, an' he is, an' shure, Bill Joanes!"

Here the dialogue was interrupted by the appearance

of two of Bill's Scrabble Hollow acquaintances, whom he thus greeted, as they entered the field:—

“Hello, Sam Biggs an’ Jake Andrews; how are ye, fellers!”

“Pooty considerable, Bill Jones; an’ we jes want ter see if you’ll jine us in some fun fer next week.”

And there was a brief confidential conference near the road-side fence, in which the trio participated, and the result of which Mike learned as Bill started to return, and said in very emphatic tones:—

“No sirree, fellers, ef the court understands herself, Bill Jones don’t perpose ter jine in no sech doin’s, an’ ye’d better let out the job. Haint ye hearn tell as haow Tom Stedman’s gin aout word that he’s not gwine ter let Peters be merlested?”

“What,” said Biggs, “Tom Stedman helpin’ Elder Peters! An’ I’ll hazard a fou’-punce-ha’-penny, six times over, thet he’ll turn New Light, too!” •

“Dun it a-ready, fellers, sartin as the sunrise!”

As Sam and Jake reëntered the highway, the former took a large quid from a roll of “fine-cut” and stowed it away in the “off-side” of his mouth, and, with the air of one seeking to establish or continue fraternal relations, passed the precious package to his confrère, remarking:—

“Dip deep, Jake—an’ ef thet air don’t beat the Dutch, Tom Stedman turned New Light! Wal I swa-o-u-w to goodness gracious! ‘Sartin as the sunrise,’ sez Bill Jones; an’ who knows but Bill’s thinkin’ o’ jinin’, tew?

An' Jake, sposin' this thing should be too many fer fellers like us?"

"Wal, Sam, jes likely uz not. An', then we'll hev ter gin up some o' aour loafin, an' try ter be somebody. An' mebbe we'll hev ter quit terbacker an' those big words o' ourn. Fer, they say Peters makes 'em do suthin' besides perfessin'—them what starts aout in his meetin's."

"You're jes' right. But Peters don't feel erbuuv a feller; leastwise ef he don't git daown inter the mud hisself,—an' he don't—he puts out a han' to a feller an' lifts him aout on't."

"I say, Sam, ef you jine I'll foller suit."

"Agreed, fer. next time thet Peters holds forth ter the Cross-roads er Scrabble Holler, 'cordin' ez we ken fetch it 'bout."

And the "agreement" was carried into effect, not long after, and the names of Samuel Biggs and Jacob Andrews were duly inscribed on the "class-book" at the Cross-roads, they preferring to become members there rather than at the "Hollow," thinking it best to leave their former belongings and in a new place begin a new life.

CHAPTER VIII.

HEREDITY AND INDENTURE.

THOUGH it may seem strange and incredible, it is nevertheless a truth, that, while the physical self of a child must have two parents, the soul of a child, and therefore the child's real self, may have but one parent. And, another truth being that soul or spirit is transmissible and must be transmitted to offspring, it follows from the two truths that one of the parents of the physical self of a child who has a soul of single parentage, must have had no soul. For, did that parent have a soul, then, another truth being that spirit is, and must be, harmonious with itself, that soul, blent with the soul of the other parent of the physical self of the child, would have been transmitted the inheritance of that child, who would thus have a complete soul, or rather who would thus be a complete entity and not the incomplete soul of a single parentage. Fortunate beyond computation the child with soul of dual parentage. Fortunate in that, he will be likely to carry his spirituality dominant, serenely and constantly regnant, over the animal, the earthly, the selfish, of his composite being, and likely to build a symmetrical character, develop a full and strong personality, and lead a beautiful life.

With a soul from one of the parents of his physical self, a child may inherit, O, terrible fate ! the earthliness, the selfishness of the soulless parent of that physical self. • And if the child with the inherited incomplete soul have no special inheritance of selfishness to overcome, it will be a great undertaking to bring that child to his best development, and so to his best ability for achievement, to the right of possession of which ability even his incomplete soul points. Yet to this, to which his soul, if completed, would entitle him, he can not attain until that soul be thus developed. And that result will come, must come, in a degree at least, through the influence, the inspiration, of some soul that shall be his foster parent. If hard the work of developing the incomplete soul, against which there is not arrayed a great selfishness of nature, how difficult, and in cases how almost impossible, the task of bringing the incomplete soul to its full development when there is earthliness and selfishness in the child for the spirituality, the soul, to combat ! And what must be the result when there is earthliness, selfishness, enough to require a complete spirituality to conquer, and little, if any soul to war against that selfishness ! What a work for culture ! What a work for divine grace ! And what a demand for charity in judging those who err ! What battles the spiritual self of the fallen man may have fought with the earthliness, before he fell ! What persistency of patient work, what magnificent bravery, may his soul have displayed before it was vanquished !

How suggestive in this connection and of what tremendous importance is the question of the sage of Concord, "Can you help a soul?" O, ye of high spirituality, to what grand mission do that question and the needs of humanity summon you! Have you the acquaintance of one whose soul has no father and who is possessed of the idea that because the man, the male human, who is the father of her physical self, is selfish, all men are selfish? Lead her up to a noble womanhood, where, rid of the idea to the possession of which, though it is false, she honestly and inevitably came, she shall be admired by noble men and true women. Has a boy's soul the incompleteness of a lack of the parentage of a mother soul? Noble woman, you whose spiritual ken discerns his needs, are you not by that power to discern, by the words of the great Emerson, and by the numberless hints, injunctions, and commands that gleam on the pages of the Old Book, called to be his foster mother? called to develop his spirituality or to teach him to develop it? called to lead him up from his earthliness, from his selfishness, to the estate of noble manhood, wherein he shall be admirable in the eyes of noble women and fit to be companion of one of them? In that estate he will be wise enough to seek one fit for him, and brave enough to seek, even if fearing defeat in the quest, and sensible and strong enough to accept defeat, and just enough to think even kindly of the one who refuses, knowing that it is something to his credit to have been defeated by one "worthy of his steel." And

such an one will, in the very refusal, give the manly suitor hint and help to further search and final success. Honest effort leads, at last, if not at once, to achievement.

This kinship of soul determines love, and should be allowed to determine the control and culture of the child. But laws of human making do not take note of such kinship. So, when the child with soul of single parentage is robbed by death of the parent of that soul, whom, of course, he loves, the law gives full control of the child to the remaining parent of his physical self, who is not in the least akin to the child's soul and who is, therefore, not akin to his real self.

The boy Edward Atherton, now fatherless by the death of the one from whom he inherited his soul, and whose real self has always been motherless, how sadly orphaned is he! How worse than orphaned, with the only parent gone that his real self ever had! Why was not the other parent taken and the boy left to the teaching of the one to whom he was akin and whom he loved? Or why was not the little one taken with the father to heaven and the tuitioning of the angels! Instead, he is left to the control of the one who is only the mother of his physical self, who is not akin to him, and who despises him for all the high qualities which make him akin to the one who is gone! This, in a day when it is thought that the best thing to do for a child is to govern him, that is, to tyrannize over him. And all the more important the tyranny if the child is possessed of a fine nature, of sentiment, of imagi-

nation, of a soul! Control of this child of gentle nature, the finest quality and the beginning of the noblest aspirations, given to one whose only fitness for control is the capacity of a coarse will-power to tyrannize! Control of this rare child given to one who, had she one spark of soul about her, would ask to sit at his feet and learn of him!

And the week following the funeral did Mehetabel Simpkins, "she that was," for the circumstance of the ceremony by which she acquired the legal right to the name of Atherton,—which she disparaged,—write the full name of Mehetabel Simpkins Atherton on a paper, "binding out" the boy, who, because of the aforesaid circumstance of ceremony and the circumstance of her being the mother of his physical self, was legally in her control!

Lemuel Barnes, selectman of Dayville and foreordained and elected to be saved, "conferred with the bereavèd" and thought it would be well "to place the boy in the keeping of one who would hold a firm and even hand over him," and suggested as the man eminently fit "for the master of the boy," Deacon David Grout of Hardland. And "hoping the God of all grace would comfort the hearts of the widow and the fatherless," he retired, taking with him several "ole papers with sum pensul marks on 'em th't my man used to spend his time a-makin'," as the aforesaid Mehetabel Simpkins Atherton remarked when she brought them forth, at Barnes's asking, from "'tother room." This asking was made in a manner that did not indicate the papers to be of importance. And she did

not know, and Barnes did not know, that the lot was minus one paper. But it was. Finely drawn plots sometimes lack their essential feature, and that feature, in other hands, may become the central element in the scheme to overthrow them. Concerning his drawings of the model of an invention Mr. Atherton had chanced to speak when calling at the house of the Cross-roads miller. This fact was remembered by Mrs. Taylor when, on the Monday after the funeral, she saw Edward coming to the house of Mrs. Williams, with whom she still remained as companion in her sorrows. A motherly woman like her will inspire the readiest response from a boy, especially one who is starved for a mother. And when she asked him to bring one of his father's drawings he answered in a trice, running to the little brown house and returning with a paper labeled with his own name, in his father's handwriting.

"This is a good thing to remember our neighbor by," soliloquized Mrs. Taylor, and placing her hand on the boy's head she said, "My little man, this ought to be saved for you. I'll keep it, if you wish. It is marked 'For Edward.'"

"Yes, Mrs. Taylor, keep it safe; I shall want to see where father wrote my name."

"Indeed I will, Edward, and when you are grown up you shall have the paper."

Did something whisper to the good woman as she soliloquized, "Who knows but that paper will be of im-

portance some time? A good deal has been said about Mr. Barnes's getting drawings from Atherton for little or nothin'. And somehow Barnes's great house, and fine furniture, and four-horse carriage, big stun walls round his 'home lot,' and Mrs. Barnes's silk gownds, and Nelson's silk hat and all the rest, seem more than one farm in Dayville can pay for."

The day after Barnes's call on Mrs. Atherton, the Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber called, and of course he found the woman "pleased to see her dear pawster." He "came to suggest the propriety" of her heeding Mr. Barnes's advice about Edward, and to say that he would write and have Brother Barrett inform her concerning the one to whom she meditated committing the boy.

By due course of mail passed the following correspondence, which explains itself:—

"HARDLAND, June —, 185—.

MRS. MEHETABEL SIMPKINS ATHERTON:—

DEAR MADAM: Pleased that the Lord has moved the Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber, your pastor, to request me to write to you concerning Deacon David Grout, to whom you propose indenturing your boy, I respond by saying that I consider Deacon Grout, as does every one else in the church, a most excellent man. He is one who 'ruleth well his own household' and is a man of well ordered life and godly conversation. He is industrious and eminently practical in secular affairs, and is faithful in matters pertaining to Christ's kingdom. I most thoroughly believe him to be a man of deep piety, sound on the decrees and minor points of doctrine, and one of God's elect unto eternal salvation. Fortunate for your boy will it be if you place him in the care of this worthy man. May we not confidently hope that, in this fact of your son's coming to live in his family and under

his care, there is evidence that the boy is also one of those whom the Divine Will has elected to be saved? May we not believe that he to whom God shows such marked favor as to order that he have this golden opportunity for improvement, especially the benefit of the example of this servant of the Lord, is one of God's chosen on earth, who, in the fullness of time, shall be gathered into the heavenly kingdom, to go no more out forever!

Dear Madam, you must have found a terrible ordeal, in the dispensation of Providence which removed from you the partner of your joys. And of that bereavement the necessity to part with your son is one of the unpleasant results. But may we not see, in this trial, a new proof that you also are one of God's foreordained and elected? For 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.' Trusting that you will see the divine hand in these events, that culminate in your son's going to so good a place to live, going where he will have 'line upon line, and precept upon precept,' and be under the very 'droppings of the sanctuary,' asking you to make this entire subject a matter of prayer, and always in your affliction to remember that

' God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm;'

and to remember that, in your experiences, as in the lives of all His elect,

' His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower;'

I am, dear madam, respectfully yours,

ABIMELECH BARRETT,
Pastor of the Hardland Church of Christ."

" DAYVILLE, June —, 185—.

DEAR BROTHER BARRETT:—

Your letter has been received by Mrs. Atherton, and although she seems loth to part with her son, she has acted on the suggestions of yourself, Mr. Barnes and her pastor, and will send the boy to Deacon

Grout. The papers of indenture are being made out this (Saturday) afternoon, and a week hence Mr. Barnes will take the boy to his master. I hope he will instruct the lad how to work and will not allow him to acquire the habits of shiftlessness which his father had, and that both yourself and Mr. Grout will see to it that he is instructed in the Westminster Assembly's catechisms, longer and shorter, and will take care that in all things he is 'brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace, I am,

Fraternally yours in the gospel ministry,

JONATHAN EDWARDS BARBER,
Pastor of the Dayville Church of Christ."

According to plan, Lemuel Barnes, "selectman, foreordained," etc., carried the boy to his "master" at the appointed time; and Mr. Barnes's farm-hands thus discussed the event as they strolled toward the Cross-roads the evening following the lad's departure:—

"I'll be consarned, Mike Tobin, ef 'tain't too gol darned bad that Dr. Johnson, or somebody else like him, couldn't a-tuck the Atherton boy and gin him a good bringin' up! Instid o' that, ole Barnes has got him bound out up to Hardland, to a feller just like the ole man,—Grout, I b'leeve's the name o' the feller. Barnes might a-tuck the the boy himself, but th' ole chap knowed better 'n to have Ed where Bill Jones is. Fur that air Jones, ef he does say it himself, an' ef he is a harum-scarum feller, is jes' what don't allow no 'busin' a young one. An' Bill's what ken spell able to back up his braggin'! An', agin Mike,—"

"Well, fwwhy don't yer spake yer moind, Bill Joanes, an' kape on wid yer gintle kind o' swearin'? But, bedad,

Moike Tobin can't tell how Mishter Barnes allows the likes o' ye to be spakin' in contimpt."

"You bet yer bottom dollar, Mike Tobin, th' ole man won't say nothin' 'gin Bill Jones. But, as I was sayin', that boy Ed oughter stayed here. What a perlite little feller he'd a-ben ter run errands fer the doctor! An' he could a-got sum skulin' to the centre deestrick, too. But he's gone, like a 'lamb to th' slorter,' as I once heerd Priest Barber reedin' out o' the Bible up to the meetin'-house. Barnes druv off with the boy toward Hardland bright 'n airly this mornin'. I wan't axed to go, but you bet I went, an' ole Barnes didn't hender nuther. You wuz out a-milkin', you know."

"An bedad, Moike had ter do the chures himself alone—an' that's the raison of it, is it? An' ye tuck nairly all the day ter yerself, comin' back jes' afore Misther Barnes. The divil of a Joanes ye be, an' shure!"

"Mike, that little feller looked so kin' o' sorry it jes' made me e'enmost cry. I'd tuck along three dollars on the Wayfil' bank ter give ter him, an' when ole Barnes stopped up ter the water-troth fur his hoss ter drink an' was busy fixin' the hoss's bridle, I jes' telled the young-un, 'Ed, Bill Jones is sorry fur ye, as much as this,' an' I gin him the money. An' he, takin' it, sez perlite, 'Thank you, Mr. Jones,'—the fust time 't anybody called me 'Mr. Jones.' An' he axed me to take it over ter the miller's an' gin it ter Mis' Taylor, ter keep fur him. Thinkin' I hadn't done enough, I gin him an' ole Spanish dollar 't

I'd ben keepin' for the notion on't. Then I telled him good-bye, an' ole Barnes druv along; an that air leetle man, lookin' down inter the brook, seemed as daown ter the mouth az ef he'd ben havin' a whippin' an' another wuz a-comin'. I'm goin' over ter see Mis' Taylor naow, with the money. Ef Ed's mother wuz anythin' at all she'd 'a' never let her boy ben bound aout. But I spec's she's ruther pleased ter git red o' carin' fur him. Well, here we are, to dad's. I'll stop a while afore goin' ter Taylor's, an' I s'pose you'll go back."

"An' fwhen ye laive the miller's, would ye be shtoppin' at the house beyant, to see the gerrl, bedad, Bill Joanes? An' shure, Mollie Jenkins is a dacint gerrl, then."

"Gol darn yer, Mike Tobin, you jes' cut sticks 'n draw yer sled!"

Mike, chuckling at the success of his thrust, dodged the pebble that Bill sent whirling after him.

"Consummate hypocrites!" exclaimed Dr. Johnson that evening, as he looked up from a letter he had been perusing, "do they think their fine-spun circumlocution of verbiage can befuddle me? 'Ministers of the gospel' indeed! Schemers, with a shrewdness of management equal to the cunning of a politician!"

"What is it, dear?"

"Why, that Mr. Barber of the Dayville church, with his man Barnes and the Reverend Abominable Barrett, Barber's 'twin priest' at Hardland, have indentured Ather-

ton's boy to one of the Hardland Grouts! After making my calls, to-night, I stopped at Mrs. Atherton's to get the boy to work for me; and of course I didn't tell her that one reason for seeking him was to take him from her keeping. She said to me, with much satisfaction, 'I've got him bound aout where he'll be larnt to stan' 'roun' an' not be dreamin', like his dad wuz.' She seemed elated over a letter from the Hardland minister, which she gave me to read. Just look at the audacity of it! Cowper's noblest taken to voice the hypocrisy of the prince of Pecksniffs! Stanzas filched from the grandest lyric of the language, to aid the lies of a letter written in furtherance of a plan of Lemuel Barnes! A scheme consigning to the keeping of a tyrant one of those whom the Great Teacher declares as nearest, among the dwellers on earth, to the loveliness of the inhabitants of the skies! And that tyrant, Deacon David Grout of Hardland, foreordained to heavenly bliss! A Grout predestined to a place in the kingdom of the gentle Christ! A seat in heaven to pay a Grout for memorizing the catechism and assenting to its doctrines! I verily believe Barber and Barrett prize the 'decrees' more than the beatitudes of Jesus, the Saybrook platform than the sermon on the Mount!"

"Doctor, I relish your vehemence; and just think of Mrs. Atherton's great grief at the death of the 'partner of of her joys,' as your 'Abominable' Barrett phrases it! What torture that Atherton had! Some good angel attend the boy that is left fatherless and worse than mother-

less! By the way, doctor, Marion Belmont, indignant at Barber's behavior at that Cross-roads meeting, declared she would have some flowers at the meeting-house here; and she was as good as her word, and last Sunday she set a pitcher of sweet peas, marigolds, larkspur and phlox on the communion table, and carried another to the singers' seats. It's a wonder I didn't hear of this before to-day; but it's no wonder that you should fail of hearing it,—you're too busy to learn of anything but the condition of your patients."

"Good for Marion Belmont!—There's the knocker."

The physician returned with Esquire Belmont, who at Mrs. Johnson's request told the story of the first flowers at the Dayville meeting-house, closing his account with:—

"When Marion took that pitcher at noon to carry it home for fresh water and more flowers, she held it up for Mr. Barber's inspection, saying, 'Looked well in the meeting-house, didn't they!' And he replied, 'Yes-er-but-we-won't er-have-any-m——.' 'Yes, we will,' said Marion. 'And we did, that afternoon. And I predict that Marion 'll have her way about it every Sunday; so Mr. Barber will find before him a rebuke of his unkindness to Agnes Smith.'"

"How cruel it is, Friend Belmont," said Dr. Johnson, "for a minister of the gospel to hurt a child's heart! Give my compliments to Miss Marion, and I'll warrant that if the flowers in your garden give out, Mrs. Johnson will be glad to contribute from our grounds."

"That I will, Esquire Belmont."

CHAPTER IX.

ARROGANCE REBUKED.

LEMUEL BARNES, who was never known to manifest excessive meekness, more than ever felt his importance as he returned from delivering the boy to his master. Why should he not be conscious of his consequence? Did not he, "selectman of Dayville, chairman of the standing committee, and foreordained and elected unto eternal salvation," as he had often thought himself and soliloquized himself to be, did not he design, and with the aid of the minister execute, the plan of "binding out" the lad where he would be governed and worked enough and scantily enough fed to "keep down the evil" that was in the child of one "tainted with the doctrines of the New Lights," and given to high notions, as was this child? Of course Lemuel Barnes was of great consequence! So thought he, and so thought Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber as he received his leading layman in the parsonage parlor the day of his return from Hardland, and so certainly thought the minister, as, on arising to depart, Mr. Barnes proffered him, a fortnight before it was due, the quarterly instalment of his salary, remarking that the sum included "an X thrown in as his personal gift because the salary was too small."

"I thank you, Brother Barnes, for your efforts to maintain the cause of our Zion, showing, as you do, great interest in keeping alive sound doctrine, and also doing so much for the temporal affairs of the church."

With such pleasant words as a "sweet morsel" to ruminate upon, the layman visited the Dayville post office, where he received, as he expected, a monthly remittance of one thousand dollars for the use of an invention, which he acknowledged on the spot and returned home, thinking: Atherton was gone, who, for the trivial circumstance of being the inventor, insanely thought he had some claim to the income from the invention, a claim above the great sum of two hundred dollars which Barnes paid him for that for which he, Barnes, had received thousands, with tens of thousands to come in the twelve years the patent had to run! Atherton was dead, and where he could not again trouble the "foreordained" aforesaid, and the boy was indentured and out of the way. Were not these facts proof of the divine favor toward Lemuel Barnes? Of course they were. Yet Barnes was not happy, but, like the ancient, sighed for "more worlds to conquer." His next point of attack was Esquire Belmont, to whom thus he addressed his errand:—

"That note will be due three days hence, and on non-payment I shall promptly foreclose on the lot mortgaged as security."

Though disliking to ask a financial favor of any one, Mr. Belmont appealed to his brother magistrate, and

received a request to come at once to Wayfield. There he saw his creditor, Mr. Barnes, in the presence of one who was wholly fearless and whose musical voice assumed a chilling severity as he commanded :—

“That note, sir, which you hold against Mr. Belmont!” It was produced and Harrison again demanded :—

“The mortgage, too, and at once!”

Quietly but carefully scanning the papers, Harrison handed them to Mr. Belmont, and, softening his voice, said :—

“Mr. Jameson, my personal check for the amount of the note—get it cashed at the bank, at once, and in coin.”

The money paid over, Mr. Harrison, resuming his severity of voice, said, turning to the Dayville selectman :—

“Mr. Barnes, you have behaved of late in such a manner as to make you clearly amenable to the law.”

“What!” thundered Barnes, his old pride of position reasserting itself. But he had met more than a match in the will of Harrison, who, conscious of the righteousness of his cause, increased his intensity, as he said :—

“Bluster and insolence will not avail you. Hear what I have to say, or I will at once order you under arrest for the offence committed in attempting to intimidate a magistrate, to say nothing of that affair of yours in trying to silence a man who was speaking in an orderly manner to those who wished to hear him speak. Your pride, and the fact of your being allowed always to have your own way, have so blinded you that you may not have thought

your action criminal. But it was so, and I shall not allow the act to pass without due apology to the one you offended."

"I—I—think—I owe no apology," said Mr. Barnes, encouraged by the sight of the face of Mr. Barber, who had driven to town with him, and who now came in to await his departure for home.

"Sir, at once apologize to Mr. Belmont, or a warrant for your arrest will be issued forthwith, and an officer next door will serve it. And Mr. Barber will make no interference or he'll be arrested on the spot, as well."

The apology was stammered out.

"One thing more, Mr. Barnes: Never again interfere with a New Light preacher who behaves in an orderly manner, as Mr. Peters has always done,—never, sir, never. Heed this injunction and the other matter will rest; otherwise it will not!"

"Papa," asked Marion Belmont, when her father, on his return, told her of the scene at Harrison's office, "isn't that noble of Mr. Harrison! I believe Mr. Jameson likes him."

"I believe Mr. Jameson likes some one else!"

"Papa!"

"Mr. Jameson, you bring me a letter from Dayville," said Esquire Harrison, of a morning in August, as he opened a missive handed him by his former clerk and new partner, "and I thank you for your politeness."

And the magistrate read aloud, and evidently for his associate to hear:—

DEAR MR. HARRISON:—

Returns have at last been received from an investment which I had begun to think was beyond recovery; and I am glad to be able to forward, as I do, herewith, the amount due you for getting that mortgage discharged two months ago. Thanking you for your financial aid and especially for compelling an apology from one who had wronged me, I am,

Yours sincerely,

ALBERT BELMONT.

“By the way,” said Mr. Harrison, as he laid away the letter, “you are acquainted with the Belmonts, I think, Mr. Jameson.”

“I have met Esquire Belmont.”

“Ever pleaded a case before him?”

“No, have you?”

“Yes, several times; and you have a case to present before him, ere long.”

“Is that so? When is the case to be heard?”

“I have not learned of the date; but you ought to know”—and the merry twinkle of Harrison’s eye suggested the real meaning of his words to Jameson, who thus struck back:—

“Mr. Harrison!”

“O, it’s all right, Mr. Jameson, and I congratulate you. Marion Belmont is a bright girl, and I hope you will look up all the authorities who have anything on that class of cases, and yet rely more on your own heart and your own good sense than anything in the books, that you will have

all your arguments well in hand, and that you win the favorable findings you deserve !”

“Thank you; and were senior counsel in order, I should at once retain the gentleman I address, who, great in the legal attainments that entitle him to the high respect he receives in the courts of law, possesses, also, those fine qualities that would make him a welcome and effective pleader at Hymen’s court, as well !”

CHAPTER X.

GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT.

MR. PETERS, whose wise improvement of the circumstances attending the first meeting at the Cross-roads gave such impetus to the movement inaugurated, and won for him not only the admiration of his helpers, but the good-will of those not specially interested in the cause that engaged him and his, found both the work and the people's appreciation of it growing through the summer, and he awoke to new diligence as duties multiplied, and grew in meekness as his fame increased. Humility is accordant with self-respect. He who is self-respecting will, can, and must seek to improve; and he who thus seeks shows less pride than does he who does not try to grow or mend. The proudest man, in the worst sense of the word, is he who, uncultured, willingly thus remains. There is a pride which is commendable, compatible with self-respect and with humility. It was noted that the unassuming man, who was chiefly instrumental in the awakening, while remaining, with the heightening of the importance of his undertaking, as modest in behavior and as unegoistic of word as ever, and, in fact, increasing in unselfishness of speech and of demeanor, grew in power of utterance and in elegance of expression. He had evi-

dently kept in mind both the promise of improvement given Mrs. Smith and the pledges to betterment then and since required of those enlisting as itinerants. His sermon showed finer workmanship and his management of each occasion evidenced the growing sagacity of the man. An illustration of his knowledge of human nature and of his loyalty to the voice within was given at a meeting in September. It was evident at the opening that the preacher was in an unusual "exercise of mind," and all bowed their heads, as he knelt in silent prayer. No one noticed the entrance of a stranger lady. She was superbly attired in a velvet habit, and looked with contempt on the humble worshipers, intensifying her scorn as the preacher rose and read for singing:—

"Weary souls that wander wide
From the central point of bliss,
Turn to Jesus crucified,
Fly to those dear wounds of His!"

The psalmody done, a prayer followed, and, arising from his knees, the preacher said: "I had thought of speaking to-night concerning God's mercy; but I must take quite a different topic. There appears no reason for the change, other than the leadings of the Spirit,—and those I have learned to follow. The text that comes to me is, 'Be sure your sin will find you out,' and I am led to instance, as the wrong-doer to be specially considered, the one who, seeking and winning a woman worthy of him, without reason deserts her—leaves her to the chill of blighted hopes, the bitterness, the agony, the darkness of despair! It is

a mystery that I should be moved to preach on such a subject to a people among whom I have seen no indication of a need for warning against wrong-doing of the kind indicated. Still, such is the speaking of the voice within.

“Disastrous as are the effects of falseness, when the parent deserts the child, the physician his patient, the sentinel his post,—equal to the wrong and the wreck caused by these, or by any other act of unfaithfulness, unless it be the disciple’s deserting his Master, and in quality, and in effect, like even to that, is the crime, of him who deserts the one who has given him her all! I refer not to him who seeks release, before marriage, from one whose liking is unaccompanied by evidences of qualities that fit her for his mate, one who has not character for him to respect, the heart to love him adequately, the soul to inspire him to his best. By going from such an one he could enhance the interests of both. But he who wins one who has a soul to love and a character to admire, one who, like a real woman, wishes to acknowledge him lord of her love,—he who wins such an one and deserts her deserves punishment of a severity beyond the power of language to describe. However well the reticence of the deserted one may keep this man’s wrong-doing from the knowledge of the people, he may ‘be sure that his sin will find him out!’ Heaven spare me from applying to some one present the central truth of my theme, and yet the voice within commands me to speak—to whom I know

not, yet, I am sure, to some one present—commands me to pronounce the dread words, ‘Thou art the man!’”

A breathless silence of a moment, and the stranger lady, rising to her feet, exclaimed:—

“No; it is not a man, but a woman! not a man, but I to whom you refer; I, who spurned the love that was mine, and might have been mine forever. In keeping with that scorn I came here to behold, to sneer at, the scene of a school-house meeting. The text startled me, and I was about to leave, when the clergyman introduced a man as the offender, I concluded to remain. A sense of my sin oppresses me, and burdened with a crushing responsibility, my soul cries for pardon, if pardon there be for one so ungrateful to God as I have been, so devoted to fashion and given to frivolity, so cruel as to break the heart and make miserable the life of one whose love would have been high honor! Can I enough repent? Is there forgiveness for so great wrong-doing as this?”

Calm and clear was the voice of the man of God:—

“There is for all, through Christ, mercy with the Most High. It is He, of whom it is said, ‘as far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.’ If that utterance is not enough, cheer your heart with the ‘whosoever will’ of the Revelator’s vision. Does that prove insufficient, another invitation is, ‘Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved.’ And culminating all the promises is the one existing in the fact, attested by the solemnity of Calvary, that Christ in the

hour of His agony, forgave a suppliant for pardon, and promised him Paradise! Aye, trembling one, 'whosoever will' may be saved! shall be saved! and that, not in the future only, but here and now! He who suffered, to make possible your salvation, only asks that you acknowledge your need as you have done, and your faith in Him as I believe you will!"

In the group of kneeling supplicants she bowed who had been Fashion's queen and who had trampled without compunction on a human heart. Pouring out his soul in prayer, the preacher then arose and, with an earnestness that dispelled diffidence and inspired response to his invitation, he asked "those who had found peace" to indicate by rising the fact of their new possession. And the stranger was one among those who "witnessed."

Mr. Peters prefaced the benediction with cautioning his people to speak little of the occurrences of the evening, and to mention them in a way that would not feed the greed of the curious. "Happenings of such high significance," said he, "are too sacred to be bandied about by the unthinking, and I promise to denounce as in utter disregard of honor, any ridicule of the confession of the brave and sincere woman who has, in the stress of her contrition, told of the ways that have troubled her."

The meeting closed, the minister explained to the new convert the meaning of the six months of probation for beginners in the new order, and asked for her name on one of the "class books." Removing her right glove,

with a jeweled hand she wrote the name of Claire Belmont. And when other probationers had inscribed their names, she said, in an "aside" to Elder Peters, "I live at Philadelphia, where I have been the rounds of gayety. One of my faults is holding myself above my poor relatives, the Belmonts of Dayville, who are good people and respected by all the best who know them. Cousin Marion is fully worthy of me, but I snubbed her in company at my father's house, where she should have been regarded with all considerateness, and I have shunned her since then. It is right for me to humble myself before her, and I'll do it to-night. For the summer I am at Wayfield, whence I came to-night. My horse is outside. I came here circuitously, that I might not go near uncle's house. But the road that way shall be my route of return, and I'll beg Marion's pardon, and tell her what her proud cousin has done here to-night."

As Esquire Belmont laid down his paper and gazed out on the September sunset he said, "Marion, I cannot account for the injustice there seems to be in the lot of many really worthy men and women. There is with me nothing that should lead to murmuring. Although I have not wealth, I have the comforts of life, and although called, a few years ago, to part with that worthy woman, your mother, I have you for confidant and friend, one who is everything a daughter should be. But others, many others, are loaded with burdens too great for endurance.

There's a striking instance of this hardness right here in Dayville, the case of a young man who came here in June, and whose forlorn appearance has excited much curious remark from those who should have been moved to pity. I doubt if he has received a kind word from —— ”

“From any one except you, father ; it's just like you to be interested in those in trouble.”

“I have spoken kindly to him. And when he chanced to go by the house, the day you were on your last shopping drive to Wayfield, I called him in, he looked so hungry. And he shared with me the lunch you had prepared. It was a right hearty ‘thank you’ he gave me as he left. I learned the fact that he ‘did something at painting ;’ of course I could not ask any ‘leading questions,’ as a lawyer would phrase it, but there was something about the man to indicate that he had seen suffering. Perhaps it was an affair of the heart that gave him his grief.”

“Did you learn his whereabouts?”

“He is stopping at Farmer Jameson's.”

“And his name?”

“Let me see—yes, I have it, Henry Evartson, and—Marion, I hear the knocker.”

As the door opened, a voice :—

“Marion Belmont, will you forgive one —— ”

“Claire, with all my heart.”

And the two sobbed in each other's arms.

“And uncle, you too?”

“Of course I will !”

The account of the scene at the Cross-roads completed by the new comer, her steed was housed and fed, Claire remarking as her uncle returned :—

“They’ll think it strange at the stables that my horse is not back, but it is not the first night that he has failed to report to his groom. Never did the good courser bear his burden on such a pleasant errand as that to which this night he has brought me.”

“Well, my niece, I’m right glad to see you, and Marion will be more than happy ; and you can change your headquarters from Wayfield to your uncle’s house as soon as you please.”

“Claire,” said Marion, “you might as well obey. Father is a justice of the peace, you know,—has his say about things, and doesn’t allow any back talk against his orders, for that would be contempt of court !”

“I don’t see as there is any alternative for me but to submit. I like your pleasantry, and the scene at the school-house this evening is delightful to remember ; but, still, I am not fully happy. The rather, I am far from it. You who are my friends will surely keep something which I wish to tell you, and give me your sympathy, that my heart break not with its remorse.”

“Rest assured that you can trust us, and dear, troubled heart, tell us all.”

“Indeed you can trust us, my niece.”

Kneeling before her cousin, Marion Belmont, looking tenderly up to the weeping one, said, “Dearest, tell me.”

"Ah, could I somewhere see him, and undo the wrong I have done—could I but see—Henry Evar— could I but see——"

"Marion, the knocker again."

"A gentleman to see you, father."

"Why, Mr. Evartson, I believe."

"Yes, but I see you have company."

"We have, Mr. Evart——"

"Henry Evartson!"

"Claire Belmont!"

And the sacredness of the scene witnessed by Albert Belmont and his daughter Marion, let them treasure among the choicest memories of a life-time.

Farmer Jameson had retired long before his boarder returned that evening.

There was another stranger at the Cross-roads meeting, the week following, another "inquirer," and another probationer's name on the class-book. A meeting of more than usual import was held at the school-house six months later, and among a group to whom Elder Peters extended the right hand of fellowship were Claire Belmont and Henry Evartson, who, for the occasion, had come up from Philadelphia, where the latter was beginning to be recognized as an artist, and where the fact of Miss Belmont's reconciliation with her former lover was pleasant news in

the best circles. Another of the band was a child whose responses to the preacher's words showed not only that she was making good headway in conquering her inclination to lisp, but also that she fully understood the significance of the vows of discipleship. Before taking her place with the others she laid an offering of flowers on the communion table, beside the bread and wine that were used in the sacramental ceremony following the completion of the work of organizing a church of the New Lights. A mother's eyes glowed with satisfaction as she looked on the womanly girl, and Daniel Smith, who had dispensed with crutches, was present, and radiant with serene joy. The woman with half the Cross-roads school-children clustering around her was Miss Sampson, who was in high delight over the pleasant scene. Mrs. Wilcutt was there, and hand-in-hand were two who heartily responded when the names of Samuel Taylor and Mary Taylor were called. Another of the company was one who by his self-respecting ways and the improvement he had made in speech was fast outgrowing the sobriquet that had marked him, and was coming to be known as Mr. Stedman. With him were Samuel Biggs and Jacob Andrews, who had for six months lived up to the required standard. After coming to the Cross-roads they worked

“'mang the farmers roun'”

until winter, when they became “hired men” for Stedman, who, at the suggestion of Farmer Smith, embarked in the enterprise of clearing the timber from a forest on the

estate of the latter. The two lived "on the lot," in a house of the most primitive architecture, a dwelling which, however, their ambition to mend in all their ways led them to keep scrupulously neat and which they made cheery with wood-fires and the inspiring songs that voiced their new-found joys. Their employer saw them daily and found them good axe-men. He divided the rest of his time between marketing at Wayfield the wood and timber they cut, and studying reading, writing and arithmetic, at his lodgings at the farm-house, where he recited to Mrs. Smith.

At the next meeting of the annual conference, to which it belonged, the "Wayfield circuit" ceased to exist and the "minutes" of the meeting included, on the list of appointments of the "preachers-in-charge," "Dayville Cross-roads, John Peters," with six younger and less experienced ministers for the other places in the territory of the circuit where societies had been established or classes gathered that asked for regular preaching. It was this year that the custom of circuit-riding, once in vogue with the itinerants throughout the country, but gradually going out of fashion, was abandoned in this region where it obtained later than in others of the older sections of New England; and here as elsewhere the "traveling preacher" became a stationed man. In spite of the hardships incident to it, the life he had led possessed charms for him, and he was no doubt loth to relinquish the freedom it afforded and confine himself within parish boundaries. These, however, were not often narrow, and nearly every charge

contained outlying districts that gave him scope for his capacity and his liking for exploration and his desire to advance the cause in which he was enlisted. This was true of the Cross-roads station; and Elder Peters found that the nature of his work made it necessary for him to keep a horse. Rejoicing that he should not have to part with his favorite "Billy," that had so long been the companion of his journeys, he laid saddle-bags aside to treasure as relics, and his plain buggy became known to all the country folk of the neighborhoods around the Cross-roads and of the other stations where he was called by his juniors in the ministry, who naturally sought the counsel and companionship of the wise, kindly and helpful man.

Mr. Harrison, who naturally became the administrator of the estate of Esquire Williams, found, on examining the titles to the lands of the deceased magistrate, that the farm which he had deeded to Daniel Smith was larger than had been supposed, and included a tract in the north-east triangle of the cross-roads that named the neighborhood. In this lot was the site of the school-house, the use of which land had been leased to the district, the ownership remaining with the proprietor of the farm. Advised of the facts and informed that Mr. Smith would deed in fee simple a site for the school-house farther north on this triangular tract, the authorities accepted the proposition, and the school-house was removed to its new location in time for occupancy at the beginning of the summer term. The people did not at first understand the full significance of

Mr. Smith's gift. This, however, became apparent at a meeting of the New Lights in June, when Elder Peters announced that "the brethren and friends will be glad to know that the Lord has put it into the heart of one of our number to give us land on which to erect a house of worship. It is the very spot whereon, at that time, stood this school-house, in which was held the first meeting of our order in these parts; and the plan of the structure, which is under advisement, places the pulpit where stood the teacher's desk. Our friend also offers us timber enough for the building, to be cut from his forest on the hill overlooking the river, and the young men and strong who will 'lift up the axe upon the thick trees' may report to Brother Stedman on the ground, to-morrow, on the first anniversary of the first Methodist meeting at the Cross-roads. By the middle of September the timbers will be sufficiently seasoned for the carpenters to begin their work; and at that time we hope to have the foundations laid. These are to be cut from the granite quarry on the Hardland road. The raising will come in October, and we trust to complete the work in November and hold our dedication and Thanksgiving service at the same time."

This programme was carried out to the letter; and at the appointed time the elegant gothic meeting-house of the Methodists was ready for the ceremony of consecration. A committee of ladies, with the girl Agnes Smith at their head, had tastefully adorned the pulpit with flowers. Prefacing the exercises came a pleasant surprise in the

shape of the announcement that an indebtedness of five thousand dollars incurred on the building "is liquidated on the spot, through the generosity of Mrs. Henry Evartson of Philadelphia, who makes the gift as a thank-offering to God for His goodness manifested to her in such abundance." A choir selected for the occasion sang with unction the rhythmic part of the service, and clear and strong was heard the voice of Marion Belmont, while the voice of Elder Peters kept fully even with the highest notes of the choir. In the audience were members of the church of the standing order at Wayfield, while the face of their minister beamed benignly on the congregation during the sermon of the itinerant from the text, "for the people had a mind to work," and his voice in the benediction, which Elder Peters desired him to pronounce, gave unmistakable evidence of his good will for the New Lights and his interest in the movement they had inaugurated.

Specimens of the conversations overheard as the congregation were dispersing from the grounds of the new church, testified of the popular estimate of the movement:—

"I'll be consarned to kingdom come, Mike Tobin, ef that air Peters ain't a good deal of a feller, any way."

"Thruer fer ye, Bill Joanes, bedad an' it is."

"I swaow to goodness, an' the seven-fold shield of Ajax, ef Bill Jones don't think he'll hev ter jine the New Lights some time 'r other. Guess he'll hev ter bite off his by-words mighty short fer him."

"An' ye will, thin, Bill Joanes, bedad."

"An' what'll yer priest do about yer goin' to 'heretic' meetin's so much? He'll be skemunicatin' ye, won't he?"

"Let 'im, thin. Divil a bit Moike Tobin cares for the praste, an' shure."

"What would the Reverend Abominable Barrett say to this, Mrs. Johnson?"

"Well, well, Doctor, hasn't it been a day! How beautifully Marion Belmont sang."

"Well, Deacon Sherwood, this is a good day for our Methodist friends."

"You are right, Dr. Robinson."

"I tell you, Deacon, it stands us in hand not to call anything common or unclean that is evidently chosen of the Lord to aid in His work. These earnest people who make so much of the Revelator's 'whosoever will' are sent of the Master, and I heartily wish them God-speed in their good work."

"Father, how charmingly the Methodists get on together; what a fine spirit they manifest; how sincere they appear in their regard for each other. What do you say, father, to my singing for them?"

"All right, Marion, if you wish."

The man walking away without speaking to any one, is the Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber. The New Lights

whom he had despised are growing in influence and numbers, and even he is not so wholly blinded by self-conceit as to be unable to see that they are making progress.

Bill Jones was as good as his word, and "jined" the Methodists. He surprised Elder Peters one day at his lodgings, at the Smith homestead, with a visit and this announcement:—

"I'll be gol darned, Elder Peters, ef Bill Jones don't think he ought ter jine yer sort of folks."

"Is that so, Mr. Jones?" said the elder, vainly trying to repress a smile at the familiarity of the man.

"I snum, ef 'taint naow; an' haow's the way to jine? The fact is Bill feels mighty oneasy in here,"—and Bill placed a hand on his breast, "an' haow's the way to git red o' this ere load?"

"Repenting and abandoning the wrong of the past, and doing right in the future."

"But haow's a feller ez hez allus ben more wrong than right goin' to spell able?"

"I think he would need the Lord's help—in fact we all need it—and also the inspiration of the fact that the experience in the Garden and at Calvary was for him."

"The best way is to begin at once, aint it, Elder Peters?"

"It is."

"But afore I make a break, therè's suthin' I must tell ye an' ax ye to be sartin sure ye don't tell it agin."

"If it is anything I can conscientiously keep—"

"I've got to tell it any way. It's bothered me long enough."

"Out with it, then, my man; 'with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' "

"Well, yer see, ole Barnes, who I'se ben workin' fer, somehow got hold er some 'venshuns th't Atherton made, what used ter live up thar on the Wayfil' road, an' I knowed about it, an' ole Barnes he knowed that I did. An' I s'pose ter keep my mouth shut, he's gin me a mighty easy job ter his place. An' naow ter come ter the case in p'int, is't right ter be hol'in' the pesky secret? Bill kinder thinks 'taint."

"It is not; but know it you do, already; and if you are not party to his defrauding the inventor of what he should receive for the inventions, there is for the past no sin at your door. But you are just where temptation would come."

"That's so, an' ole Barnes once tried ter git me ter write my name on a paper showin' th't he'd got 'n' paid fer the right ter the 'venshuns, when I was sartin't he hadn't. I'm mighty glad't I didn't put the ink on that air paper."

"Be sure that you resist any temptation to take, from fear or favor, the keeping of any more dark secrets. If by so refusing you suffer any loss, my word for it, the Lord will make it up to you."

"It's clear as the mornin' over the mountain, what Bill Jones has afore him, an' he's a gwine ter turn over a new leaf an' jine the Methodists."

"I am glad to hear it, and pardon me, Mr. Jones, if I suggest that it will be well to drop a few of your by-words. I do not refer to that fine expression, 'clear as morning over the mountain.'"

"You're just right, I must stop some o' that tother kind o' talk ; but I'll be con — there, ef Bill Jones hain't got a job to bite off them air words."

"The Lord will help you, Brother Jones."

"An' you help me, too, by callin' me 'mister' an' 'brother,' showin' that ye don't feel above sech as me."

"I should respect every honest seeker for light, and why should I not call myself brother to one for whom the Master suffered and died?"

"An' d'ye think 'twould be anythin' wrong ef we jest kneeled right down here, an' you ask Him what's up in heaven, ter hev a kind thought for sech a poor feller as Bill Jones, what feels as ef—"

The penitent did not have time to finish his question before the two were kneeling to supplicate favor from that place where all are alike accountable, where all are regarded as brothers, and where there is unspeakable joy over one that repenteth.

There was a surprise at the Dayville meeting-house shortly after, when the inquirer, announcing the stand he had taken and the peace he had found, wrote on the class-book of Thomas Stedman, the name of William Jones. He found by-words to be his "besetment," but succeeded in cutting down his volubility to an infrequent "gol-

darn," and to dropping, at last, the first syllable of the expletive.

It was not long after this that Barnes tried to induce him to become party to another instance of his dishonesty in the matter of the Atherton inventions, and met a prompt refusal. The employer rebuked this by discharging the man. Although this removed all obligations he had been under to Barnes, Jones did not retaliate by instigating a prosecution as he might have done, but, in keeping with the teaching and example of Mr. Peters, he rendered good for evil to the one who had wronged him and whom he had it in his power to humiliate. The preacher was not only a correct religious teacher, but a safe adviser in business affairs; and the illustration he had given of his wisdom in the one direction he supplemented with proof of his capacity in the other. At his suggestion Jones began raising, on the heretofore untilled land at his father's house, vegetables for market at Wayfield. A few quiet hints from Mr. Peters to his acquaintances among the first families of the town, resulted in an increase of the business until the cart of "William Jones, market gardener" became a familiar object in all Wayfield, and there was a demand for another cart. This was promptly met and Mike Tobin, who had tired of the service of "owld Barruns," was installed as driver. Gains from the enterprise exceeded the additional outlay enough to suggest to the gardener the further improvement of his lands and remodeling and enlarging the Jones house. This better-

ment, which greatly excited Mike's interest, preceded by only a few weeks an event that showed that his thrust, previously made, was not only pointed, but prophetic; an occasion at which the officiating clergyman was Rev. John Peters, and at which Miss Mollie Jenkins became Mrs. William Jones. At a subsequent occasion of this kind a German girl, by the name of Gretchen Schmidt, became the wife of Michael Tobin, whom she had induced to forsake the ancient church of his fathers and join the New Lights.

The limit of the pastorate of a preacher of the new order was then, by General Conference legislation, fixed at two years; and when the close of the term of Mr. Peters approached, the lay officials of his charge planned to take advantage of some one of the exceptions to the rule that they might retain him among them. But he counseled them to desist from carrying out their purpose and let him go where the "powers that be" should direct, even if it sundered him from a people that were "dear to him as his eyes." But for other reasons than those discussed by pastor or people he was to remain with them. Unknown to him or them the promotion of this preacher, for which they, had they stopped to think, would have deemed him fully worthy, and of which, in his modest estimate of his own consequence, he had never thought, had been considered and advocated by the men prominent in the denomination outside of his field, a promotion that would not only give him for four years to the people he

loved, but would make their station the head-quarters of the district.

The reports at the next session of the annual conference showed that the membership of the new church had increased to one hundred, and that a Sunday-school, with nearly as many members, had been established, with Daniel Smith for superintendent. To those in his counsels it was evident that the bishop presiding had great respect for Mr. Peters ; and as it was proposed to make a new district that was to include the stations where this preacher had won his success, he was conferred with in reference to the interests of the order in that region. At his suggestion the name Wayfield was given this district, and the word "Cross-roads" was omitted from the conference name of the church in the locality it had previously designated. He had no hint, however, of the plan of the bishop and his cabinet for the promotion with which he was surprised at the close of the session, when the secretary announced : "Wayfield district, John Peters presiding elder." Though busied with answering the congratulations of the preachers sitting near him, he did not miss hearing the appointments, which ran : Dayville, Wilbur F. Warren ; Brier Hill, to be supplied ; Ridgeway, Wesley Merrill ; Hardland, Embury Cramner ; and so on through the list of thirty charges. As those who had been given oversight of the other districts came, after the bishop's benediction, to congratulate Mr. Peters, he responded :—

“Thank you, brethren, for your interest. I regret, however, giving up the work of a pastor, but I gratefully accept the honor conferred and will endeavor to meet the obligations which the assignment brings. It gives me the right to choose, in the district, my place of abode, and I shall not have to leave Dayville, where the Lord has been so good to me. Preachers with ‘gifts, grace and usefulness’ have been appointed to the charges, and the one to be near me will by his name remind me of a dear boy who is gone, and the sweet, sad pleasure of thinking of whom is always accompanied with the inspiring hope of meeting him beyond the tide!”

CHAPTER XI.

HIS WISDOM AND HIS LOVES.

IT was gratifying to the Smiths to think that the itinerant, to whom, when on his travels in the humble beginnings of his career, they had given welcome, had become distinguished as an organizer of churches of the new order and that, when the promotion came that gave him oversight of the charges of a wide region and the right to choose his place of residence, he still sought their house for his home and made the parish in which they were the foremost leaders, the head-quarters of the district. Such distinction would have elated some people. But Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Smith, who were too genuine to become vain over success, were also too busy with their own affairs and with the work of their growing church to note the evidences of its growth or to dwell on the fact that it was, in a sense, proof of their own consequence. It was indeed their sincerity and their humility which gave them their good fortune of continued relations of friendship with Elder Peters. Those not possessing such qualities he indeed sought to lead into a religious life, for the good it would do them; but he did not fraternize with them closely, even when obliged to associate with them in church work, and he certainly did not seek a home with

them. Though having little if any pride, his humility was the genuine kind that accords with self respect and not the craven spirit which would accept the gift that, from the selfishness in which it is bestowed, belittles rather than blesses the recipient. In his experience of meeting all sorts of people he had learned that those vain over their own importance proffer their favors only from selfish motives, and he had learned to read, from the manner in which courtesies were offered, the motives prompting them; while the business of declining those that smacked only of a wish to obligate him he had reduced to an art which it was refreshing, instructive and even entertaining to see him exhibit. His "no, thank you," which always followed a selfish proffer, was spoken with that politeness that made it unobjectionable but with that firmness which plainly said that further attempts to secure the acceptance of the courtesy would be useless, and which finally so discouraged the patronizers that at the time of his promotion he was well rid of them; and this advancement, though giving work that called him about more than did the tours of the circuit-riding days, did not increase the probability of meeting these objectionable people; for to them it seemed that the elevation, over which he never gloried and concerning which he rarely, if ever, stopped to think, had invested him with that importance through which it would not be safe for them to attempt to obtrude. Busied formerly with the duties of a pastor and now caring for many churches, he had no time to make

acquaintance merely for the sake of acquaintance, and he knew only those whom he met in the prosecution of his work. From these he selected with great care those he wished for friends. Yet, as his life showed, he was a man of democratic views and had a heart for all humanity. His exhibitions of reserve never resembled the exclusiveness of the self-righteous and, rather than repelling those to whom they were made, invited them to a higher and better life in which they would naturally be at one with him.

A man of the finest social qualities, he was companionable to a friend and pleasant company to any with whom he cared to associate. Delighting in the graciousness manifested towards him by genuinely courteous people, he accepted that proffered by no others, even though so worn by his work, that, had he been less noble and less discerning, he would have accepted even the counterfeit of kindness which the kindness of the selfish always is. And he needed more than graciousness; he needed friendship; and he needed even more than friendship. He who is alive with interest for those he is pledged to bless; he who walks in spirit side by side with the one struggling to rid himself of a load of remorse, aids him to find relief at the cross and then rejoices with the forgiven one; he who is called again and again to minister to the sufferer and nerve him for the final conflict, inspiring him with the faith to see, beyond the grave, the towers and groves of the city of rest and joy — he who thus thrills,

agonizes and bleeds for his fellow man, needs the enheartening, the inspiration of genuine love! love that is frequent and emphatic in its expression; love whose glow, outshining the stars "that sparkle on the midnight," and shining through every night, gives lustrous, abundant and abiding proof of its eternal constancy!

And Mr. Peters, who so much needed this high help, had it only as he could make vivid a memory. To his determination to keep that sacred he had bravely adhered. And soon after his promotion there was a talk between himself and Mrs. Smith which showed this bravery and the wisdom he exhibited in dealing with that class of patronizers whom a minister without a wife has to meet. As his hostess and friend, she had been asked for an introduction by a lady who supposed that his well known disinclination to become specially acquainted with any woman arose from the fact that he had not found the right one.

"Tell her," said Mr. Peters, "that I thank her for the honor she has shown me, but that, with a vow registered on high to love no other woman than the one who is there, I shall seek affiliations with no other."

"I admire your wisdom and your courage, Mr. Peters; for your life must be lonely, and the woman who asks for your acquaintance is indeed not only attractive but excellent, though mistaken in the idea that she is specially fitted for a companion for Rev. John Peters. It is noble of you to keep alive, as you do, the respect for the mem-

ory of the one who is gone. And I will bear witness that you give no woman whom you meet occasion to think you have especial regard for her."

"And I am helped in my decision to keep single by the love of my daughter, who is all the more affectionate and faithful for the respect I cherish for her mother's memory. And my longing for a child's friendship, all the stronger because of the absence of the living presence of her whose name I cherish, is well met by the affection of your own bright Agnes."

"Thank you for your friendship."

"Will you allow her to journey with me on my visits to the nearer charges of the district?"

"I presume her father will consent, and if he does, I shall coincide."

"With all my heart I thank you, and I take the child's friendship not only as a gift from her parents, but as a gift from her and as a sacred trust from God to whom I am accountable for all I have. And she shall be more than ever yours."

"I doubt not that from her experiences when in your charge, she will grow in goodness and blossom towards womanhood."

And Agnes Smith, the first convert of Elder Peters at the Cross-roads, became more than ever his friend. On his drives on Saturday, to meet a quarterly appointment in the adjoining towns, she was his frequent companion. Under his tuitioning she became an expert with the reins,

and "Billy" came to know and heed her voice as readily as he did that of his master. What educating experiences were these drives for the bright child; and what opportunity for her to see and appreciate the noblest kind of manhood! And this association, in childhood, with a worthy man was a sure preventive against future encroachments by any man unworthy of her. What an inspiration was her presence to the preacher with whom she journeyed! How suggestive her artless words as she exclaimed in delight over a brook purling by the roadside, a cascade dancing down a rocky glen, the robins caroling their joys in the trees, flowers looking up among the grasses, or a view that opened at some turn of the way they traversed! No wonder that he thought, as the traditions of the district credit him with saying, that "some of the brightest thoughts that came to him were suggested by the innocence, the sincerity and the joyousness of that dear girl."

These journeys gave her many opportunities to study human nature at its best. Often, too, she sat in the quarterly conference meetings of the churches visited, and so had a chance to learn the workings of the machinery of the polity of the New Lights.

On her first trip to Wayfield Agnes was introduced to Mr. Harrison, who afterwards said to his partner: "Mr. Jameson, that is the brightest girl I ever saw. How natural she is, how fearless and yet how modest." On her next visit, a fortnight later, she was introduced to Mrs.

Harrison, who at once fell in love with the girl and insisted that Elder Peters allow her to remain until he returned, the next day, from his official visit to Scrabble Hollow and Brier Hill.

"All right," said Mr. Peters, "but remember you have a borrowed jewel."

"Indeed, I will."

On her return home Agnes said: "Why, mamma, do you believe, I stayed with Mrs. Harrison, and she has the finest house in all Wayfield, and such a lovely woman as she is, not cold and haughty if she does have such nice things. She is just as good as she can be. She showed me flowers, lots of them, and I read to her out of the Bible the story about Joseph down in Egypt. Then I read from the Psalms something real good, and then we kneeled down and, putting her arms around my neck, she prayed for me ever so good and it seemed as if she was talking right up to heaven. And I asked her afterwards if Mr. Harrison ever prayed. Then she just waited a minute and said that he didn't pray, but he was real good to her and she prayed for him every day, and she wanted me to pray for him, too; and that is what I am going to do, mamma, if you think it's best. He is real good to Mrs. Harrison, mamma, just as kind as he can be, and when I told Mr. Peters about this that I am telling you he said Mr. Harrison can talk so in court that the judges have to do what he says. It is fine, mamma, to have such a chance to see good folks; and when I am with them I

just love you and papa all the more. And I think it's real kind of you to let me go with Elder Peters."

"Ah, my child, thank you, thank you!" and the overjoyed mother, as she clasped the girl for a kiss and an embrace, thought the words of Elder Peters were indeed realized and that Agnes was not only more hers than ever before, but that she was nobler than ever she had been.

"And, mamma," said Agnes between kisses, "just think, I can carry flowers to her and she will be so pleased. So I can pay her for making my visit pleasant. For I ought to do something for her as well as she does something for me."

"Right, my child. Pay your indebtednesses, especially those you owe such people as Mrs. Harrison."

"She has flowers of her own, but I know she will like to be remembered by me."

"She will, indeed."

The child who inaugurated in a plain back-district school-house the beautiful custom of flowers to adorn the place of religious worship, carried a floral offering every time she visited the first lady of Wayfield. This generous-hearted woman did not keep to herself the blessing of the friendship of the bright child, but took occasion to have her friends call when Agnes was to make her visit. And Dr. Robinson, when he came one evening to accompany his wife home, laid his hand tenderly on the child's head, saying, "Agnes, I think it kind of Elder Peters to give you

such charming drives, and it is just fine for him to have a young friend to cheer him."

When Agnes returned from this visit she said, "Mamma, all the standing order people are not like Mr. Barber, are they? Mrs. Sherwood, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Harrison are not, are they?"

"No, indeed they are not; I think Dr. Robinson and many who attend his church are genuine Christian people. Dr. Robinson, and Deacon Sherwood have a very kind regard for Elder Peters."

And so they did, and showed it too. The next time Agnes returned from Wayfield she said:—

"Do you believe it, mamma, I went to church with Mrs. Harrison and sat in the best pew in that fine meeting-house where Dr. Robinson preaches. When he rose up to open the meeting, he could hardly speak because he felt so good. And he said, 'It is not right for us to call that common or unclean which God has chosen, and I am glad to introduce Rev. John Peters, who has kindly consented to preach for us to-day. For him I bespeak an attentive hearing, and I have asked him to read that grandly sweet hymn, "Jesus lover of my soul," written by the great hymn-writer of the New Lights, Charles Wesley.' Everybody kept so still while Elder Peters was reading, that you could hear a pin drop. And the singers just did sing as if they liked to do it; and then Elder Peters prayed right up to heaven. Dr. Robinson read the psalm, 'Behold how good and how pleas-

ant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' And when he sat down he was almost crying for joy. Elder Peters preached about 'this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.' He spoke just as if he was all alive with what he was saying. I never before saw him so like what I think the angels are. When I looked up I saw tears of joy in Mrs. Harrison's eyes; and she was holding my hand so lovingly! Then I looked around and saw Mrs. Sherwood; her face was just as joyous as it could be. Mamma, isn't that the way folks are up in heaven?"

"Yes, Agnes, dear."

When Mrs. Smith narrated to her husband the account Agnes had given of the meeting he replied:—

"Elizabeth, I remember, I remember—that twenty-five cents for flowers, eleven years ago, that little money and giving up my will, has made me the richest man on earth!"

The fraternizing of Dr. Robinson with Elder Peters was too much for the Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber, and he wrote to the Wayfield minister inquiring into the reason for his catholicity and demurring against the liberality exhibited. The letter was written in that dictatorial spirit which led the recipient to think it beneath him to notice the missive, so he declined to reply, but, instead, sent the Dayville minister a courteous invitation to an occasion the make-up of the programme of which showed that the fraternal feeling between the standing order of

Wayfield and the Cross-roads New Lights was on the increase. The day following his declining to accept the invitation of Dr. Robinson, Mr. Barber read further evidence of this cordiality in the following paragraph from the *Wayfield News* of that week, which announced that :—

“ We are glad to note that the good will shown by Dr. Robinson in inviting the eloquent Elder Peters to address his people is to find still further expression on the coming Fourth of July, when the Wayfield Congregational Sunday-school will make an excursion to Dayville Cross-roads, and there with the Sunday-school of the New Lights, whom Reverend Jonathan Edwards Barber has so bitterly opposed, unite in a celebration. The grove selected for the scene of the proposed occasion is on the farm of Daniel Smith and overlooks the river and a wide reach of country. Mr. Barber’s congregation have been invited to participate in the festivities of the day, but he has declined; yet we venture to predict half his people will be present. The programme for this unique and beautiful occasion, at which Mr. Thomas Stedman will be marshal, includes an address of welcome by Elder Peters, response by Deacon Sherwood, prayer by Rev. Dr. Robinson, reading of the Declaration of Independence by Mr. Henry Jameson, singing of the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ by Mr. Theodore Cushman as tenor and Miss Marion Belmont as treble, and an oration by Mr. Andrew M. Harrison. Rev. Dr. Robinson, who is not only a good sermonizer but has the bright wit that aids the joyousness of a festive occasion, will be toastmaster at the dinner provided by the ladies under the direction of Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Harrison; and among those to respond to the sentiments of ‘Our Country,’ ‘The Old Flag, long may it wave,’ etc., will be Mr. Jameson, Mr. Harrison, and Rev. Mr. Peters. We predict that the demonstration will be a complete success. And hoping for our friends favoring skies on the ‘day they celebrate,’ we commend, as worthy to be copied by all who wish to bury sectarian differences, the spirit of which the event we announce will be a most beautiful expression.”

The prediction of the paragraph was realized in all its fullness, and the Cross-roads observance of the day of national independence, that closed with a vote to repeat the programme, the next year, at Wayfield, was quoted by everybody except Mr. Barber, Lemuel Barnes, and others of like frigidity and narrowness, as one of the pleasantest occasions they had ever known.

As Agnes was about starting, of an August Saturday, on a trip to Wayfield, she asked her mother for permission to carry some flowers to a girl whom she met at the time of her last visit, and who, as Mrs. Harrison had written, was ill.

"So you want four bunches of flowers," said Mrs. Smith, "one for Mrs. Sherwood, one for Mrs. Robinson, one, of course, for Mrs. Harrison, and one for the sick child."

"Yes, mamma; but can you spare so many?"

"Yes, dear; we have more flowers than formerly. Papa likes them very much and every season urges me to 'raise more flowers this year than we did last.'"

"Mamma, isn't papa just as good as gold?"

"Better than that, and better than I can tell you, now."

"Say, mamma, I can take good care of Wesley; and it's a fine day and I wish you would let him go with me. I know Mrs. Harrison would like to see him."

"All right, Agnes. Although papa will feel lonesome if Wesley is absent only a day, I know he will consent to his going, for that will relieve me of the care of the boy for the time. And papa is always concerned about my

having so much to do. So get your brother ready and I will be back from the garden soon, with the offerings for your Wayfield friends."

Called from his work to bid the boy good-bye in the event of his going, for the first time, from the keeping of his parents, Mr. Smith kissed him, and thrice tossing him up, placed him in the lap of Elder Peters; and Agnes, pulling the reins, said, "Come 'Billy,'" and drove off, as the boy said:—

"Good-bye, papa, I'll come back all right."

"Of course you will; good-bye, my little man."

Driving through Dayville village, Agnes saw Mr. Barber standing in the parsonage door, the man who wounded her heart by rudeness exhibited as a rebuke for a beautiful act which he translated as the idolatry of a pagan. And looking up to Mr. Peters, she said, "I am glad you asked me to forgive him that time, because ever since then I have pitied him rather than hated him."

"That is right, Agnes," said the preacher; "it is following the Master to cherish pity rather than hate, for wrong-doers."

"Come, Elizabeth"—and Mr. Smith, who, with his wife, had watched the departure of their children on the drive, walked with her in the garden, where the fragrance and bloom reminded him of an act, in the other days, of which he could never think without tears to attest the joy which its multiplying results of good gave him, tears that

spoke the gratitude of a glad heart, gratitude to God, and the one He had bestowed on his life. "Elizabeth"—and he looked down into the eyes that read him through and that reflected a soul which said, "I know you are all mine." And he quivered with joy to hear the words that came as if in response to a question of faith not of doubt—which she read in his eyes, "Yes, dearest, all yours."

As they reached the arbor and entered to tarry for a time, he said:—

"Dearest, you do not spare yourself enough. To-day, please work but little; and I'll quit the field early, and, if you choose, we'll drive over to see the Taylors. They must be lonely since their son died. We have two children to comfort us, and what cause we have for thankfulness!"

"Indeed we have."

"And I ought to have seen our neighbors before this."

"Do not too much blame yourself; for your farm and the interests of the church have rightly occupied your time to the exclusion of all else. And I rarely cease work."

"Rarely, unless it is to get rested that you may meet me with cheerfulness of spirits when you expect me to come in fatigued."

"Thank you; and to-day we will visit our neighbors and cheer them, that, if possible, they endure their great loss."

"Yes; and what an indescribable sorrow must be theirs!"

"Great enough, surely, without the added thorn of the

unkind words of a minister who should have sympathized with them."

"What, has Mr. Barber vented on them, in this time of their trial, his spite against the order with whom they have cast their lot?"

"Just that. It was a fortnight ago that he uttered his spleen, but I heard of it only to-day."

"A minister of the Gospel, isn't he! What a contrast between Mr. Barber and the man God has given us. How full of comfort were those beautiful words at the funeral."

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, whose son Albert had been taken from them, were crushed with grief. And, to add to their sadness, came the aggravation of strictures by Mr. Barber, who, opposed to the doctrines of the New Lights which they had imbibed, and uneasy over the success of that order, thought it right to do anything to hurt their adherents, and declared the death of the boy to be "a judgment of the Lord, sent to rebuke the parents for harboring false doctrines and for setting their hearts on the child." He was a fine boy and gave promise of growing up to a manhood that would reflect credit on the family. But, if there ever were parents who, loving a child, still recognized the fact that he was given them of God not to be idolized but to be taught, by those who regarded him as a treasure, that he could rightfully have nothing in this world but what he earned, and that he had responsibilities to meet as well as privileges to enjoy, those parents were the

Taylor of Dayville. They were deeply wounded by the words of Mr. Barber, that, with the speed at which "things said about folks" travel in a country town, reached them the next day after the minister of the standing order spoke about them to Lemuel Barnes, the foremost of his "fore-ordained and elected to be saved!"

But the childless parents had good help to enhearten them to endure their sorrow and to "rise above" the effect of Mr. Barber's unkind sayings. There was genuine sympathy breathing in the funeral words of Elder Peters, utterances that told the mellowness of a heart which knew what bereavement meant, funeral utterances that were not funereal, but that "glowed with the hues of the heavenly dawn that awaited the young soul and seemed trembling with the cadences of the carolings of the brooks and the birds of the upper Eden!" Mrs. Williams, who naturally felt grateful for the neighborliness shown her, in the early days of her own bereavement, by Mrs. Taylor, had now, in turn, driven daily to the house of the latter to speak words of real sympathy and carry blooms that were as eloquent with tenderness that soothes and inspires as are even the words of one who has endured sorrow and so earned the right and acquired the ability to bless the sorrowing.

Thus cheered in her grief, Mrs. Taylor, whose sunny nature was not only the proof against most thrusts to prevent them from wounding, but was a medicine that cured from the cuts of daggers it could not ward off nor quench,

had also conquered the effect of the Barber slanders and had encouraged her husband bravely to bear the loss and the stings.

They received thankfully the sympathy of the Smiths, but surprised and delighted them with their very evident determination to forget,* as much as possible, the loss which, of course they could never fully forget. Mrs. Taylor's interest in church work helped to this end, and Mr. Taylor had a project which he thus made known, that evening:—

“Friend Smith, that Elder Peters of ours is not only a wonder of wisdom in managing church matters and a model of piety for church members, but he ‘knows a thing or two’ about business. He told me that a saw-mill in this neighborhood would be a paying institution and that I am the man to have one. I had saved money enough during a dozen years to send Albert to an academy and perhaps to college. But the Lord has taken him to a place where he’ll have the best kind of teaching. And, while I mourn the loss of the boy, as no words can tell, I am going to drive off grief by business. With the money saved I can buy a circular saw, a log-carriage and other machinery necessary for the saw-mill. The expense of an addition to the grist-mill building will not be much. I have enough power from the water-wheel for both mills, and it will be easy to ‘belt through’ from one mill to the other.”

“The project is a good one, and I’ll furnish you a

customer. Farmer Jameson, who wants to live nearer the New Light meetings, and who has sold his place east of the centre, has bought of me a lot of five acres on the road between my house and the river, and he purposes soon to erect a cottage there."

"Mr. Smith, I have already ordered the machinery and shall have the mill running by November, when a 'bill of timber' will be wanted by the man who is to start blacksmithing hereabouts. But your order shall be filled next."

"And so we are to have a blacksmith. And what is the name of the Vulcan?"

"Sanders, I believe. And I think he has bought a half-acre lot on the road just south of the school-house. By the way, Brother Stedman thinks his friend Biggs the right man for sawyer, for me."

"The right one, I am sure."

Thus was established the new industry at the Cross-roads, and it was destined to be followed by another, the way to which was paved by a real estate transaction that was consummated at the Smith house, the week after the visit at the miller's, a transaction between Mr. Harrison and Mr. Smith, wherein the latter became owner of a lot of thirty acres fronting on the Ridgeway road, next west of the Jameson purchase and bordering on the river. It extended back to the rapids of the stream whereon a dam of little height would give a great head of water. This "privilege" had been "improved" with a fulling-mill, which cleansed the home-made cloth of the farmers for

a dozen years, when the fuller abandoned the business, which was never reëstablished, and went to the West. His death brought the land into market, and Mr. Harrison, acting for the heirs, sought a purchaser, and naturally gave his friend the first opportunity to buy the property. With this acquirement Mr. Smith became—with the exception of the Jameson lot—owner of all the land on the Ridgeway road between the cross-roads and the river and extending back on the west side of the Hardland road half a mile, with a lot on the road east of the cross-roads.

Mr. Barber's desire to hinder the New Lights did not die out with the defeat of his attempts to stop the progress of their movements, but prompted him, with each repulse, to renew the attack with redoubled vigor. He had previously allowed it to carry him—as in the case of the Cross-roads meeting—beyond the bounds of propriety obtaining with laymen, to say nothing of the standard of behavior recognized by the ministerial profession. And now, again, he let that desire get the best of his discretions; and, politic though the selfish man aimed to be, he went so far that some "had fears" that his opposition would help the very cause it was designed to hinder. One cannot too much oppose even that which is wrong, without awakening sympathy for the wrong-doers. To the Dayville minister it seemed "great foolishness" to be so "wrapped up in children as that Peters" was. And so, of course, thought Deacon Nason, to whom Mr. Barber told his "ideas of the man that would take up precious time

with showing excessive attention to children, thus teaching them to be conceited, when they, especially the children of New Light parents, should be taught the humility befitting 'poor unworthy worms of the dust.'" And so, of course, Deacon Nason told, with his indorsement, the opinion of his "dear pawstor" to Deacon Jones, Bildad Beals, and Jeremiah Joslyn, whom he met at "preparatory lectur'," a few evenings later, when the "weeping prophet" sighed with more than wonted pathos, over such evidence of "forgetfulness." Thus voiced, the censure of Mr. Barber went the rounds with many of the people in good and regular standing with the old style religionists. But others thought his strictures would "help Peters, rather than hinder him," while still others declared it was a fine thing for him to have such a liking for children, and one lady was even heard to say that "Elder Peters is but following the Master who took the little ones up in His arms and said kind words to them," an idea, that to Mr. Barber seemed "preposterous and dangerous." He "called to expostulate with her," but she reasserted her opinion, and he thought it well not to press the matter and left the "misguided sister" to her notions.

Mr. Peters continued his attentions to Agnes and Wesley, and occasionally took them with him on his winter drives about the district. Well covered with blankets and buffalo-robcs, they enjoyed the trips right heartily, and the boy was never better pleased than when anticipating a ride with his sister and the minister. On one of these

drives they met a party of men and teams breaking a path through the drifts that had choked the mountain road. Behind the party was Solomon Dawson, a peddler of tin and wooden ware from New Hampshire, who had for several years taken his journeys through the Dayville region, and who, when the path-makers had cleared the way, drove up and thus addressed the elder:—

“This is Mr. Peters, the New Light minister, I believe, and I want to talk with an honest man about a notion o’ mine that I don’t want to get out too quick.”

“All right, I’ll respect the confidence with which I am honored by —

“Solomon Dawson—excuse me for not introducing myself—Solomon Dawson, a peddler from New Hampshire.”

“And the errand you have?”

“Well, you see, I’ve always had such good luck in this region that I thought it wouldn’t be a bad idee to have a lot of my goods on sale all the time, perhaps at the Cross-roads, and that thought led me to another, and I’ve about come to the determination to start a store. You see, my son Frank would just like the notion of comin’ down to tend it. We could keep a few other things besides wooden and tin-ware, say groceries and a few plain dry goods and notions. Now Mr. Peters, what do you say? and who has the spot to buy for a store and perhaps for a house?”

“The idea is a good one, and my friend Mr. Daniel Smith will have the land if any one has.”

"And who are these little folks you have with you, all covered up so cozy and warm? How their eyes sparkle with joy!"

"Friend Smith is their father, and their mother is a mother indeed."

"Here, wait a minute; I suppose one of them attends school?"

"Yes."

"And I am going too, next summer," said the boy.

The peddler, throwing into the elder's sleigh a bright tin-pail, said, "There, my little man, that will do for you to carry your dinner in, and I hope you'll live to be a hundred years old, and I am sure you'll try to be good."

"Thank you, Mr. Dawson, and I'm going to live a good while, I guess, and I'll try to be good."

The third "bill of timber" produced at the saw-mill was for the store of S. Dawson & Son that was erected on the Dayville centre road, where it stood for years, until, with the growth of business to demand enlargement, it gave way to one more pretentious. Another "bill" sawed at the Taylor mill was one with which to enlarge the Smith farm-house. And, later in the season, the saw was run night and day, to keep pace with the demand for "building-stuff," to stack up and season against the time "when a company organized for the purpose" would begin the erection of a paper-mill on "the old fulling-mill property of Daniel Smith," as the Wayfield paper mentioned in its chroniclings of "a busy neighborhood that promises to

become a thriving town." Later transactions included the purchase of the granite quarry, on the Hardland road, by Elder Peters, whose savings, for years, from his meagre quarterage had amounted to twelve hundred dollars, the sum asked for the ledges. He confessed to a long cherished hope to own the quarry spring from which he had so often drunk, as it seemed fit that he should possess it. And when, in due time, it came to be known that he proposed to devote the income from the quarry to charitable purposes and public improvements, everybody was pleased to think it was his, at last. In a time when most Wesleyan ministers could truthfully say, as it was held that every one of them should be able to say,

• "No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness,"

the fact of this man having worldly goods was not only thought allowable, but was admired as "a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

CHAPTER XII.

TAYLOR'S MILLS; DANIEL SMITH, POSTMASTER.

THE wise and good man confides his plans to his wife, unless she is an untrustworthy woman. That untrustworthiness may consist simply of a lack of capacity to comprehend those plans, and so, to understand how great is the trust confided, how strongly that trust should be held and how vigilantly it should be guarded. Or that untrustworthiness may be the falseness, which, however well the plans entrusted are comprehended, can and will, if selfish occasion demand, prove recreant or cruelly treacherous. And the fact that the wife of the wise man and good, is, from selfishness or from incapacity, or both, untrustworthy, is, his misfortune, and is only that; and does not, in arguing his misfortune of choice, necessarily argue his lack of good sense in choosing. But his misfortune, the rather, argues, especially if falseness is her untrustworthiness does it argue, that the one he chose is selfish and is not only selfish but has a capacity for duplicity and a willingness to assume and skill in assuming, for selfish ends, the role of unselfishness. In this she acts, until the man of the genuinely unselfish heart, who supposes, and has a right to suppose, he is winning an unselfish and trustworthy woman, is, himself, won by a su-

premely selfish woman and placed by ceremony of magistrate or minister where law and public opinion give her the right to call him husband and where law and public opinion command him to be loyal. Often in the irony of life selfishness that deserves starvation, and for the perishing of which the world would be better, finds an abundance of rich sustenance of an unselfish nature to feed upon. And the further irony is that, while selfishness grows by that upon which it feeds, it becomes in nature more unlike the quality of the nutriment in its original state, showing that in the alembic of the selfishness that devours this wealth, it is transformed into the opposite of its essential qualities.

In pleasant contrast to this was family life among the New Lights, especially that of the Smiths. Not only did Mrs. Smith know all her husband's plans; but she did not have to ask concerning them. From his wisdom in matters of business, and from the fact that he had learned that she would take no selfish advantage of his frankness and trust, he was anxious she should know all he proposed to do. And not only did he confide to her the undertakings he proposed, but he advised with her before determining upon them. It was naturally difficult for him to be expressionless in looks, and it was easy for people to tell from his face and his manner when he was animated or depressed, in a deep study or unburdened with care. And yet, heeding the suggestions of his wife he had schooled himself until he could assume the sphynx

almost to perfection. But with friends he was very frank and in her presence he was transparent as a sunbeam; and when, on the Monday morning following the purchase of the fulling-mill lot he came into the house, she looked up with expectancy as he said :—

“Elizabeth, the people of this neighborhood ought to have a post-office. They receive and send about as many letters and papers as the centre people do. This fact I had from Mr. Thompson, who keeps the post-office at his store. He might forget his statement if it was wanted for evidence in favor of establishing an office here, for that would, of course, reduce the business at his office. And, again, he might reaffirm his statement. He is getting to be well-to-do in the world and is, withal, quite a reasonable man, especially since he broke with Lemuel Barnes. He is tired of Barnes’s conducting town business on the one-man-power plan.”

“You are very right; there is need of an office here. Will you enlist Mr. Harrison in aid of the project?”

“Yes; he has great influence in all this region and he is acquainted with the member of Congress from this district.

“And when will you move in this matter?”

“At once, now that I have your approval. Something has been telling me for days that I ought to do this. Good-bye.”

Mr. Thompson heard the proposition for the new post-office, and, drawing up a petition to the Postmaster-Gen-

eral, signed it, and then called in Selectman Bacon, induced him to sign the paper, and said:—

“Of course, Mr. Smith, you cannot expect Mr. Barnes to indorse your project, and he may make it warm for Mr. Bacon and myself at the next town election. But the office is needed at your place; and for one, I shall not longer endure the dominance of that selfish and arrogant man.”

Mr. Smith found Mr. Harrison alone in his office and told his story with the animation which genuine interest in a project always gives and which the presence of a man of kindly nature stimulates. But the announcement he made produced no surprise; for Mr. Peters, unknown to any at the Cross-roads, had consulted several days before with Mr. Harrison in reference to better postal facilities for the people of that locality. The attorney concluded his account of the minister's calling, by declaring in favor of the new office, and saying, “You are the man to have charge of it.”

“No, I — ”

“Yes, you must accept the trust. In fact, I have already written to our Congressman concerning the office and mentioned you for the position. He is to meet me here to-morrow on business connected with a case in which I am retained, and your matter will be presented with all the reasons I can urge in its favor. By the way, Mr. Smith, Mr. Stedman, in whom you New Lights have such an interest, took my fancy the first time I saw him,

as you may have heard. And when, a year or two ago, Sam Simpkins Jr., son of "old Sam" the despicable, and 'a chip of the old block,' boasted of sharp practice in settling with Stedman, who, as I learned, gave him generous paced-off measurement of wood he had chopped, I determined to teach the boaster that there are exceptions to the rule that lawyers delight in smart tricks. Securing the evidence necessary to make out a case against Simpkins for defrauding, I confronted him with the facts and gave him the alternative of standing a criminal prosecution or disbursing the balance rightfully belonging to Stedman. He blustered lustily, but found that was useless. The fifteen dollars which a sworn measurer of wood decided was due, was paid. And since then it has been on interest at the savings bank, as you will see by the book which I send by you, with my compliments, to Mr. Stedman. Men of his large nature think it mean to stick for the last cent; but he that deals with a Simpkins should be as vigilant and stern as a sentinel on guard before the enemy. Forgiveness of an enemy is, indeed, one of the ideas in the beautiful philosophy of Elder Peters, which, strange as such counsel from me may seem, I advise Mr. Stedman to continue following; but even the ancient writings in which Mr. Peters believes, enjoin justice, and I have simply compelled a Simpkins to be just."

"And I thank you for Mr. Stedman."

"In the search for evidence I visited the wood-lot with

the measurer; and while he was busy with his tape, I noted the regularity of the piles and the carefully laid windrows of brush, facts from which I argued that Stedman, even in his ruder life, had an eye for exactness and a liking and the capacity for order, qualities desirable in one in any position, and qualities that, with others possessed by Stedman, are essential in the make-up of a good soldier. Tell your friend that a military company is to be formed here which is to contain some of the best young men in town. They have indicated their wish to give me the captaincy, and I know they would like Stedman to join. Ask him to call on me soon in reference to the matter."

"I will."

"And now," said Harrison, scanning the petition to note the name of the proposed office, "good fortune attend the first postmaster of "Taylor's Mills" and all who dwell in that pleasant neighborhood."

"Thank you; good-bye."

Mr. Smith was busied with his errand when a carriage drove from the house of Esquire Belmont towards the Cross-roads, and himself and Mr. Harrison were so engaged with the matter in hand that neither thought of the other member of the law firm, who, about that time had halted his team in the Ridgeway road west of the Smith farm-house and was discussing some question with Marion Belmont, whose delight at the result of the con-

sultation was thus expressed, as the carriage started towards the Smith house :—

“That will be fine, a cottage next to your uncle’s and land enough so you can hold a lot till Mr. Evartson can buy it, for a studio, and a house for a summer home for him, Claire and their little Marion.”

A deed was placed on record at Wayfield the next day, averring that for the sum of six hundred dollars, Daniel Smith of Dayville “did grant, bargain and sell to Henry Jameson of Wayfield aforesaid, to him, his heirs and assigns, to hold and to have for their use and behoof forever, a certain parcel of land situate in Dayville aforesaid, and described and bounded as follows, to wit: beginning at a stake and stone on the Ridgeway road west of the cross-roads, thence northerly, etc. etc. * * * The same being an acre from the lot deeded to the said Daniel Smith by Theophilus Williams, Esquire, late of Dayville, deceased.”

The petition of Edward Thompson and others received unusually prompt attention at Washington, and six days later papers were forwarded to Mr. Smith establishing the office of “Taylor’s Mills” and appointing him postmaster. His bond signed by the proper sureties, he located the office with Mr. Taylor, appointing him and Mrs. Taylor his assistants. The movement had not been mentioned to any one but those immediately concerned, and the result was a surprise to Lemuel Barnes, who saw in the success of the undertaking proof that he was not the only

Dayville man of influence, and that even the despised New Lights were by some thought worthy of respect. Of course "that would never do;" and, again, of course, it would have to do; for, what could even he, Lemuel Barnes, "chairman etc." though he was, and chief of the fore-ordained and elected etc., though he was, what could he accomplish if he tried to crush the project consummated by those he despised? Yet vigorously did he, at the next town election, try to realize Mr. Thompson's prediction and "made it so warm" for the opposition ticket that it was elected, Mr. Thompson receiving more votes than were ever before cast for a town official, and Daniel Smith even a higher number, with Mr. Bacon third on the list. And Lemuel Barnes was no longer selectman of Dayville, where for twenty years he had enjoyed supremacy. And the headquarters, for town business, were transferred to the locality of the New Lights, where they ever after remained.

Minus the office that had so long been source and evidence of his importance, Barnes had to fall back on church functions for opportunity to show his consequence. He was still chairman of the standing committee and still remained chief of the foreordained and elected, and these facts were something to encourage him to hope for still other means for gratifying his desire for office; and not long did he have to wait, as appears by the following utterance of Bill Jones to his helper:—

"I say, Mike Tobin, ef they hain't made ole Barnes

Just deacon, in place o' Nason th't died, jes' 's I thort they would when, 'tother Sunday, jest fer the notion on't, I 'tended meetin' up to the centre. That air Priest Barber he got up an' remarked to God jest 's ef he was on familiar terms with Him, tellin' how glad he wuz th't God wuz a-temperin' the wind to the shorn lamb and th't by a dispensation of Providence Deacon Nason had been called to serve in the 'higher courts,' an' 'Brother Jones had resigned because of advancing years.' An' I suppose that priest didn't think anybody was disgusted with his tork an' thort that no one could see through it all, an' see that all 'twuz he wuz glad there wuz another place for Barnes to show off in. The idee of Barnes out o' office bein' a 'shorn lamb!' An' they've ben an' chose 'Squintus 'Beals second deacon, partly 'cause they think th't a feller what squints can look sharp an' figger clus in money matters pertainin' to Zine, an' 'cause his nazul way o' torkin' shows th't he's piurs! How it sounds—Deacon 'Squintus' Beals! I'll bet, Mike, the fellers 'll call him Deacon Squint, kin' o' makin' a bob-tail name, yer see." And they did, the two lay officials of the Dayville church coming to be known as "Deacon Lem and Deacon Squint," and more often mentioned as "Lem and Squint."

Rev. Wilbur F. Warren, the second pastor of the New Light church, who had been absent for a month in Northern Vermont, returned with a wife, and the trustees of the

charge selected a site for a parsonage west of the cross-roads, on the Ridgeway road, which had already begun to be known as "Main street." Mr. Smith claimed the right to give both the lot and the timber for the house, and a jolly time the young men of the church had felling the trees and drawing them to the mill, and the "bee" was supplemented with a supper, after which there was an address by Rev. Dr. Robinson and verse by the pastor. The workmen had the house "closed-in" when came the first snow of winter, and at the "house-warming" the minister's bride wore arbutus buds given her by Agnes Smith. Though a man of poetic fancies, Mr. Warren showed a good deal of method and exactness in his work and began a record of the Dayville church, which has been kept up with varying degrees of faithfulness, by his successors to the present day. The allusion to the remarks of Elder Peters at the Taylor funeral is a quotation from that record, and from the same source come many other facts of this truthful history of the rise and progress of the New Lights.

The post-office at Taylor's Mills retained that name for several years, when, with the growth of the neighborhood it served, there was a movement to have the name changed to Dayville. This the people of the old village took as the "unkindest cut of all," and sent in remonstrance after remonstrance against the measure; but all to no avail. The petitioners, who equalled the remon-

strants in numbers, had also the influence of their Wayfield friends and the member of Congress; while, called to Washington on professional business, Mr. Harrison gave the project of the petitioners his personal attention, and the name asked was granted. The postmaster at the old village was informed that the office there would be known as "Dayville Centre." To this there was objection, which was met with the order that if that name was refused, the name "Old Dayville" would be given. The other was accepted.

The "Wayfield Guards," Andrew M. Harrison captain, and Thomas Stedman and Payson Sherwood, Jr., lieutenants, was long a favorite organization in the town whose name it bore and many of whose best young men were in its ranks. Their orderly behavior and their skill at manual and maneuver caused much pleasant comment among those who visited the muster-field where they paraded, and the company was in frequent demand as escort. The remark of Bill Jones concerning the efficiency of the "guards" gave the popular estimate of the company, and some had his notions concerning the Mexican war:—

"I say, Mike, ef that air Cap'n Harrison, Tom Stedman an' the rest on 'em what trains ain't about the finest sojers a-gwine, then yer ken jes' call Bill Jones no good at guessin'. Jes' think haow they'd walk inter a lot o' Britishers er any other fellers what wuz merlestin' the peace o' this kentry o' ourn. It must be suthin' like 'em what ole 'Rough an' Ready' had to the battle o' Buny

Visty, where he said them air hallelujer kin' o' words, 'a little more grape, Cap'n Bragg,' an' then went in an' heeped up the ded Mexikers what wuz gwine to scoop up Taylor'n his sojers! But still twuz mity mean bizness 'vadin' the kentry o' the Mexikers—twuz naow! Hadn't they er right to San Jewin de lower, an' the halls o' the Montyzumys an' Sary Gordy, an' the rest o' them air places where Taylor'n ole 'Fuss n' Fethers' made them bite the dust? I say, Mike, aint that air erbout ez true 's preechin'?"

"Yer right, Bill Joanes, an' shure."

"Ef I wuz ole Polk I sh'd want the Catholickers' idee true so'st I could get prayed out o' purgatory, fer no prayers o' a life time would be ernuff to dew the bizness."

"Who is Polk an' shure? Bedad an' I niver hayerd o' him, thin."

"A mighty small man ez wuz head o' this kentry when the slave owners got us inter a fuss with the Montyzumys' nashun an' made this nashun take Texas, jes' fer a state to work niggers in. The Whigs didn't like Polk an' their chil'n took up the idee. One o' the skulemarms what teeht to the Cross-roads useter ax one o' the classes, arter spellin', ginerall questions, an' gin answers, the boys an' gals foller'n sute. An' when she said, 'Who is the governor o' Conneckticut' an' gin his name, she speekt solemn an' important ez a sermon. So tew with the governor o' Massachewsits, the name o' George N. Briggs sounded as ef he ruled the hull wurd. But when she cum tew 'who

is Pres't—'Ni—Sta—? James K. Polk,' she flung out them air words ez ef they was tater peelin's th't she was gittin' red on. Yer see, Mike, ez I learnt arterwards, that air skulemarm's father wuz er Whig, an' she had his noshuns, an', 'thout a tryin', teeht 'em to the chil'n, and there's a good many young Whig voters here 'erbout these days.' But that ain't sayin' that Demmercrats is not all right, that is, ef they's the Jackson sort."

"An' who was Jackson, shure, Bill Joanes?"

"Why, he was the feller what knocked the consate aout uv the Britishers at Noo Orleens, an' teeht the 'nullifiers' better manners th'n they knowed afore."

"Yer see, Bill Joanes, Moike Tobin didn't see 'Meriky till all this was owver wid; an' ye knows owld Barruns—I spake o' him disrispictful now—fer whom I wurked since I landed, niver talked, an' shure, about such things ez ye's ben tellin'."

"An' I never thort much erbout 'em until, fired up by tryin' to be er New Light an' think o' tother wuld, I wuz led to think there wuz in this wuld suthin' bigger'n aour taown."

CHAPTER XIII.

CONFESSION.

WHETHER, to either of them, the discovery be a surprise or not, the place where Love finds his mate at prayer is to him and to her sacred at once and forever. To him her words of praise and gratitude to heaven will be sweet as orison of angel. If there be, in the outpouring, confession of remissness, it will to him seem excessive, and that in proportion to the sincerity evident in the prayer and in proportion to the sincerity and depth of his affection. And Love never found his mate in contrition but her penitence, if it was for unfaithfulness to Heaven, led him to search his own life and see if he had not need to placate the skies. And were it falseness to him that she mourned, her humility led him to like self-reproach, whether deserving it or not, and to a determination to mend; while her supplication for help from above aroused his soul to the grandest anxiety of faith for answer to the petition she spoke. Dear to them both will ever be this place of prayer; and dear to Him whose name is Love will it ever be, and guarded by the trustiest of His hosts.

Mr. Smith, a director of the new corporation, and charged by the board with supervising the work of erect-

ing the proposed paper-mill, visited the scene of operations daily during the time of excavating for the foundations, and frequently during the whole period of construction. Of a June morning, soon after the work had been laid out for the diggers, he left his house, to note the progress of preparations for the structure, and informed Mrs. Smith that he should not come back till noon. But he found that the engineer, in order to fix the boundaries of the new site, would have to ascertain more definitely the "metes and bounds" of the lot as given in the deed conveying the property, and so, in an hour, returned to get the instrument for a second inspection. Habitually light of step, especially when in a house, he entered noiselessly the open door of the living-room and his walk across the floor to the desk where his papers were kept was not heard by Mrs. Smith, whom, through the half open parlor door, he saw kneeling. Taking the paper he sought, he stood, hat in hand, listening to the prayer she offered:—

"Father in heaven, I come to Thee with gratitude, with contrition, and with supplication. I thank Thee for the many mercies that crown my life—for a husband who is loving and loyal, for children who are dutiful and kind, for a home wherein comforts abound, for neighbors who are all that neighbors should be, for friendships that are a source of constant inspiration, for air, for water, for the beauty and fragrance of the flowers which Thou hast made to teach me of Thee, and that, in their history, speak the nobility of a manly heart dearer and more beautiful than the rarest blooms! For the birds and the brooks that sing to lull me to rest, awaken me to the joys and the hopes of the morning and make the day melodious, and for all the 'bliss of being,' I

thank Thee, O Thou Divine Benignity. And I thank Thee for the Gospel of Thy dear Son that makes attainable by Thy children the joys of heaven! Grateful for what Thou hast bestowed, I mourn that I am no more thankful and that I have not shown my appreciation for Thy blessings by fitly improving them and seeking to bless others. I have remained complacent in the enjoyment of Thy favors, when I should have been awake to the fact that they were bestowed not more for my comfort than to give me means for blessing those in need, of whose wants I should have known. Forgive my ingratitude to Thee and my neglect of the needy, Forgive me whom Thou hast placed in a world of suffering where I have comforts, in a world of sadness where I have joy, in a world of thorns where I have thornless roses! in a world where, by the beautiful ministry of kindness I could have multiplied for myself the blessings I dispensed to others! Do Thou, Father in heaven, forgive for all this thoughtlessness. Forgive me for not thinking of the orphan boy and caring for him; nay, forgive me for not heeding the voice within that reminded me of him and bade me seek him out and minister to his needs! And what words can tell how much an orphan boy needs a mother! How much, O how much, does he need a mother who has no father and whose soul never had a mother! To such an one I could have ministered, but I have failed of the duty and privilege of the beautiful ministry! Forgive, O Father in heaven, and help me to do works meet for repentance. For the sake of Thy Son, hear Thou in heaven, and when Thou hearest, forgive Thine unfaithful servant that, appointed almoner of Thy blessings, didst selfishly keep them to herself! For the sake of Thy Son, forgive. Amen."

The suppliant remained kneeling awhile, when, speaking in tones of reverence and assurance, the words: "Yes, Father in heaven, Thou dost forgive," she arose to see her husband coming towards her. With tears attesting his emotions, he took her hand, and the two kneeling in her place of petition, he prayed "for forgiveness for neglecting the helpless and for grace to be helpful in the future."

"Yes, husband," said Mrs. Smith, when, with confessions done, the two had entered the living room, "I ought to have thought of Edward Atherton more than I have, and ought to have ministered to him. If God gives the opportunity, I will make amends for the past. I wish Elder Peters were here. The Hardland charge is not in his district this year, but he might want to visit that former field of his pastoral work and he would be the one to ascertain the boy's condition."

"He is the right man for such an errand, and he will be here soon. He took one of our horses to make a tour of the churches of the district and is due here this morning—there he is now, coming into the yard."

"Husband, dearest, before he comes, a word to you—forgive me for not being helpful enough to you."

"Forgive? Of course. But you need no forgiveness. Do not too much charge yourself with fault. Here is a kiss, and my heart, anew, and forever!"

Elder Peters wore an unusually anxious look as he entered the living-room, with his customary "Good morning, friends," uttered with that sincerity which would keep it from appearing hackneyed to those who heard it a thousand times.

"Good morning, Mr. Peters," said Mrs. Smith, "you look as if concerned about something."

"I have been anxious over a voice within, and in answer to it have determined to do something that is unusual for me, something which I always thought

unwise to do, because it would seem like proselyting, a mission against which I have argued for a week."

"What is it that agitates you?"

"Something tells me to visit Deacon Grout of Hardland, and ask him to become a Christian. Strange message, this, surely, to an official member of a church. Membership in a Christian church is by no means proof positive that the member is a Christian. But it is a delicate task to do an errand which presupposes he is not a Christian, that he is not that which he professes to be."

"Indeed, it must require courage, discretion and firmness. And you propose to undertake the mission?"

"Yes."

"We have an errand—will you see how the boy, Edward Atherton fares, who is indentured to the same Deacon Grout whom you are moved to call upon? I have once or twice heard that the lad was not well treated and have neglected to look after him as I should."

"And your confession leads me to acknowledge my own failure in reference to the same matter."

Where two had knelt, three supplicants bowed, while the minister of Christ implored forgiveness for his unfaithfulness in the ministry of blessing the little ones. And to his "God bless the dear boy Edward," there were hearty "amens" that spoke the determination to act helpfully to those in need.

"There," said Elder Peters, as he was ascending to his chamber to prepare for his drive, "I can see it all. Now

that I have surrendered to God's will my ideas of the unfitness of a message He gave me and have decided to obey His command, I find the journey I was commanded to make, is to be taken for another errand, and one concerning the fitness of which I should not hesitate. Tell Mr. Stedman to have 'Billy' ready soon; and I am glad the horse is fresh for the drive. Ask Mr. Stedman to go with me, for something tells me that I shall have to meet an emergency."

Taking a basket of cake, apples and cheese which Mrs. Smith had prepared as a remembrance to the boy, and luncheon that she had made ready for the minister and Stedman, Elder Peters, responding "Thank you" to the promise of his friends to pray for him, said "Good-bye" and "God help me, to-day," and, springing into his buggy, where Stedman awaited him, drove off, uttering this confidence and summons:—"Come, 'Billy,' you have an errand, to-day. Carefully at first, 'Billy,' and then God give you good speed and abundant breath." Acting as if he understood the demand and the caution, the horse trotted slowly up the road to the cross-roads, and when nearing the school-house he slackened his gait to a walk. It was recess time, and seeing Agnes, the horse stopped, and the girl patted his face and mane.

"Pray for us, little lady," said the minister as he drove on.

"Yes, Mr. Peters; good-bye, and I hope you'll come back safe."

"Go, 'Billy,' go," said the minister; and the horse sped gently along the smooth road for a time, and then, after walking up a hill, struck into a trot, at which Stedman exclaimed, "How like lightning he flies!"

"Brave 'Billy,' on, on!" said Peters, and still faster fared the horse, till wheels seemed not to touch the track, and equine, wagon and riders flew as if driven by the fleetest wind.

Reaching the farm-house where his master had formerly left him, to take another horse in his stead, "Billy," not waiting to be reined, turned into the yard. "An urgent errand to-day," said Mr. Peters, "and I must have your horse, Brother Sloan."

In a trice the horse was hitched up, and looking a second time to the straps and buckles, Sloan said, "Do your best 'Jack.'"

"Good care of 'Billy,' if you please, Brother Sloan," said Peters; and the fresh horse bounded into the road, eager to begin the flight he divined was demanded of him.

"How the fine bay enjoys the tremendous gait," said Stedman; "I have sometimes thought it possible there may be horses in heaven. What say you, Elder Peters?"

"The man who has a spirit that could take pleasure in abusing a horse, as some men do, would find it hell in heaven!"

"You are right, Mr. Peters."

"And if unkindness to a horse keeps one from final

happiness, how much more unkindness to a human being? What must his fate be who is unkind to a child?"

"What a crime that must be!"

"Verily; and Mr. Smith told you the errand for which we are going?"

"He did. And Mrs. Smith has once or twice spoken about the boy and her anxiety for his welfare. I hope we shall be successful in accomplishing our mission of compelling Grout into humane treatment of the boy. For such as Grout can be made to do well only from the fear of the consequences of wrong doing, and we'll array before him the consequences of abusing Edward."

"Yes, we'll 'array the consequences' of cruelty."

CHAPTER XIV.

"QUI FACIT PER ALIUM, FACIT PER SE," ETC.

BE not afraid; it is not a college professor who is to be introduced, nor a college graduate proud of his parchment and the learning he has stored away and has not the power to use, and who worships learning for its own sake only, without thought of it as a means for accomplishing good in the world. Neither of these is it, but, rather, two hearty young men from New Hampshire, full of life, naturally bright and with such education as they could get at a district school, and one of them possessing also the additional advantage of what learning he could acquire in three terms at an academy. This was Lewis Darling, and to him the preceptor of the institution had given a paper certifying that he was "qualified to teach a common school." With his learning and the capacity to use it, he possessed high moral sense, a love of justice, and a genial nature. To these characteristics he added firm health and great physical strength, for the man of less than medium height that he was; while the other, his cousin, Timothy Edgerley, contrasted strikingly with him in size, being "six feet, four" in his stockings, and otherwise built to bring his weight up to two hundred and seventy-five pounds, and possessed of strength far

beyond even his great proportions, yet resembling the smaller man in natural brightness and his other good qualities. "Tall Tim," as he had been dubbed by his mates in a logging-camp experience, of a winter "away up in Coös," had earned the reputation of being able to "walk further, run faster, 'rastle better, lift a bigger stun', an' dig more taters nor any other feller" in his native region of the Ammonoosuc. And the list of excellences, believed by all the neighbors and enumerated to visitors, noted also the fact that "he could cut, rake and bind more rye, drop more grass an' pitch more hay th'n any other man o' his inches an' twice ez much ez common folks, an' put up two cord o' wood a-tween sun an' sun, jes ez easy." His true eye and the steadiness of nerve of a man of good health and free from bad habits enabled him to bring down with his rifle the eagle from his highest perch and loftiest flight, and he could

"dror a furrer straighter"

than any man of his acquaintance that ever "drove a team a-field." And he would like nothing better than, with one team tired at night-fall, to take another and plow for six hours longer, by the "light of the moon," whistling, or with his clear tenor voice that had caught the cadences of the stream of his native valley, singing "Swanee River," "Yankee Doodle," "Hail to the Chief" or "Old Hundred." Six hours of the sweet, unbroken, dreamless slumber insured by health, a clear conscience in reference to the past and the consciousness of right aims for the future,

made him as good as new and eager for the work and the joys of another day.

Timothy Edgerley and Lewis Darling, cousins, of exactly the same age, and resembling each other in traits of character though contrasting with each other in physical make-up, were not only akin but had always been friends, emphasizing in their liking for each other, more strongly than did any other members of the two families in New Hampshire, the high regard that had existed between the Edgerleys and the Darlings from the earliest days of those races "away down East." From there came one of the best of the Edgerleys to the Granite State, where he married a girl by the name of MacDonald, whose sister became the wife of a Darling, who, the next year, moved from Maine. Blessed with wives who possessed the honesty, courage and sense of honor characteristic of all genuine Scotch people, and who were womanly enough to hold them through life, absolutely loyal, not only each to the one he married, but each to the ideal for wedded life which was his in his wooing and his honeymoon—thus blessed and thus kept at their best, how could they but be happy, and how could their children be other than the bright and good children they were. And now, in 1853, Timothy and Lewis, just turned twenty-one, and with brothers old enough to be sufficient help to the fathers in the management of the paternal acres, were to leave home and make their way in the world. Everybody liked them, and, on the bright June morning set for their departure,

some of the nearest neighbors gathered, with the Darlings, at the Edgerley farm-house on the stage road, to say good-bye to the "best young men in town."

Mr. Edgerley's voice was husky as he said, "God bless you, my son; and God bless you, Lewis. We shall miss each of you; but I have no doubt that you'll take good care of yourselves and do well, and will not forget the homes where you will always be welcome." The mother of each promised to each her prayers, as did the minister, who came bringing certificates of good character, signed by himself and the chairman of the town school board, and concerning which he remarked: "Well worthy the testimonials, your worth renders it needless for you to have the papers, but you can take them as keepsakes, you know." Mrs. Edgerley and Mrs. Darling prepared an ample luncheon for the cousins and were assisted by—two young women. It was in the "square room" where the taller of the young men took leave of bright little Jennie Davis, whose blue eyes looked through tears, up, away up, to eyes that wept responsive and attested the truth of his words,—“Yes, Jennie, yours, here and everywhere!”

“And, my own, I am always yours, and I am just glad that I am.”

“Jennie, ye can do me a favor by talkin’ up to somewhere an’ askin’ Him ye pray to if He’ll bless a feller like Tim Edgerley an’ keep him good as a man an’ true to jest the best ——”

His emotions were too much for the giant, and tears that rained down on the auburn locks of the woman standing by the chair in which he was sitting spoke a tenderness of soul too great for speech. "Come," said he, and as though she was but the weight of a rose, he lifted her to his knee as she said:—

"Yes, dearest, as powerless in your hands as a lamb in the clutches of a tiger, I am as safe with you as when, a child, I nestled in my mother's arms."

O blessed trust of woman in her own! was there ever a diviner thing on earth than this!

His emotions under control, Edgerley said, "You know, Jennie, I promised you, some time ago, that I would leave off all swear words an' try to be a man, an' that I'd never drink liquor,—an' I never did drink it,—an' that I'd keep from gittin' mad, as much as possible, an' you remember how determined you was, an' how I telled ye th't ye broke my will, th't you was the first one th't conquered Tim Edgerley?"

"Yes, dearest; and that was so grand of you."

"Well, you mind an' keep up the prayin' an' I'll practice accordin' to the 'greement."

"All right, you noblest of men."

"Perhaps I'll hev' ter break a big stick on a rock or kick suthin', to vent my feelin's when any one acts mean, like a man 'busin' a child or a woman."

"That will be better than swearing, and you shall have my prayers, every day."

“Here, then, now an’ forever ——”

The kisses that gave soul to soul when each gift bestowed was a genuine, undiminished, unmortgaged soul,—guard, good angels, ever guard from all unfit beholding, the scene of such high bestowment! What enactment this, by these grandly simple people, who, mated in soul, pledged to be united in life! Ah, those pledges that did not need to be spoken! pledges whose source and foundations were in the qualities of the souls plighted, qualities that, beginning and growing on earth, should grow and blossom in the eternities!

The two walked to an orchard seat, and their place of tryst in the house was, in turn, witness of a scene in which Lewis Darling and his Scotch Mary Ronald said words too sacred for others than themselves and “the gods that see everywhere” and hear even the voices of the silences! O, souls pure as the airs that wafted to the perpetual summer above the words that made forever memorable those moments of that June of Time, are there not thoughts too high for words? are there not heavenly joys on earth? Aye, verily, to such as ye, on earth beginneth the bliss of the Beyond! cometh rich, and true, and constant foretaste of the joy of the grand Consummation.

“I might as well begin now,” said Tim, as, approaching Mrs. Davis, who had come with her daughter to bid the boys good-bye, he stooped down and gave her “a kiss equal to the occasion,” as the young man’s father remarked amid the laughter of the company. “And,”

continued he, "Lewis, you might as well follow suit and make peace with your future mother-in —"

"Take care, Mr. Edge——," but poor Mrs. Ronald did not have time to complete her protest ere the challenged young man was bestowing full promise of future affection and tractability.

Well clad, with good health, high hopes, and twenty-five dollars each, and carrying, one his testimonial of fitness for teaching, which he did not need, each the needless certificates of good character, and each a copy of the New Testament and Psalms, the cousins mounted the waiting stage-coach, and, waving their adieux to the group of dear ones, bade good-bye to home and boyhood associations and started "down country," Tim Edgerley whistling

"The girl I left behind me,"

and

"Hail Columbia, happy land."

Three miles out, the cousins took seats inside, and, there being no other passengers, improved the freedom of the coach in reminiscences and resolutions, Edgerley beginning:—

"Say, Lew, what was them sayin's th't I hearn you an' the Latin teacher to the academy goin' over, when I was there tew see you last term, you remember—that about 'purrin' an' ailin'' an' 'purrin' an' seein',' an' 'dose it' an' 'did sit?' I say, Lew, what was they?"

"O," said the cousin smiling at the attempt of his questioner to quote "the languages," "I remember, now;

some maxims in Latin which the professor was asking me to commit—*qui facit per alium, facit per se*, which means, he who by another does a thing, himself does it; *qui docit, discit*, he who teaches learns; *errare est humanum*, to err is human; and *nulla vestigia retrorsum*, no steps backward."

"What was that last one you telled on?"

"*Nulla vestigia retrorsum*—no steps backward."

"That's jest me, Lew—'no steps backward' in the undertakin' to be a man out in the world, 'no steps backward' frum keepin' my promise made tew Jennie not tew git mad more'n I ken help, an never tew use swear words, and when I'm mad only break a stick on a rock or kick suthin' tew vent my feelin's. 'No steps backward'—yis, there's piles o' meanin' in them words, more'n a sermon full o' idees, an' such as wakes a feller up tew dew his best. I sh'll think on that one an' the one about folks errin'. A feller sh'd look well that he's not gwine wrong, when he thinks he's very good."

"Right, cousin."

"But I sh'd like the sayin's better written in the speech of this kentry."

"No better language than the English."

"You understand books, Lew, an' 'll be teachin, an' folks 'll say 'Mr. Darling' tew you, an' I spose they'll look down on me an' call me simply 'Tim.' That's a name you ken call me, fur with you it means what ye call fellership. But tothers, they'll find theirselves barkin' up the wrong tree!"

“Good for you, Tim ; for more reasons than one people cannot *look down on* my tall cousin.”

And they didn't. At Ridgeway he was respected by the leading farmer, Mr. Robinson, for whom he exceeded even his New Hampshire record for work, at whose table he was one of the family, by whom he was addressed as “Mr. Edgerley” and by whom he was introduced as “my friend Mr. Edgerley, from the Granite State.” Was not this acknowledging equality with a mere farm hand degrading to the citizen? Wait a few years and see the result of recognizing as a man, one who had real manliness, if he did lack polish and was engaged in a humble calling. He had at once the reward of the peace-giving consciousness of bestowing this recognition and the equally comforting consciousness that the employee respected him in turn and showed that respect by giving him the best work ever done on his farm.

Darling's first experience was teaching at Ridgeway. The following spring he pursued his studies under the private tutorship of Rev. Dr. Robinson at Wayfield, and Edgerley began work for Samuel Sumner of Hardland, who agreed to “respect him as a man and not treat him like a servant.” Apprised by Edgerley of the promise not to use “swear words” and of the novel method of working off the ire occasioned by an emergency, the farmer was not surprised, when Edgerley, of a morning in June, came into the potato-field and seizing his hoe, broke the handle over a rock, kicked a barrel into pieces, and,

taking a rail from a fence near by, demolished the same before he had quieted himself.

"I guess you found Grout abusing the boy, when you went on that errand, this morning," said Sumner.

"Well, I reckon I did."

"Mr. Edgerley, I'll willingly get a new handle for the hoe, and if you'll think of any means to shame or scare Grout into humane treatment of the boy I'll help you carry out the plan."

"It's a bargain, Mr. Sumner; an' I'll hatch out suthin' afore night that'll cook his goose for a while. I have it now; if you're willin' to give a day's work in the cause o' blessin' the fatherless, I'll go there to Grout's and jest stump him tew mow along with me. He boasts th't no one kin git ahead o' him."

"How will your mowing help the boy?"

"You see, I'll jest git Grout tew 'change work,' an' turn in the boy for two days' work for you, agin one day o' my work for the deacon. An' then you kin have a chance to be good to the boy, an' 'twill be your givin' a day's work for one o' the needy—more'n the 'cup o' cold water' the Bible tells on. Tim's a great feller to be quotin' Scriptor, though. But if you'll give one day's work, Tim'll give another, an' that'll make four days for the boy out o' the keepin' o' that tyrant."

"You could not better please Mrs. Sumner and myself than to get Edward over here, where he'll not suffer."

"I'm jest achin' to foller the deacon and teach him how a Noo Hampshear boy kin drop grass. If he don't take to my idee, I'll jest fetch it round how Tim Edgerley knows suthin' that, when he was wurkin to Ridgeway, he learnt o' Bill Jones, one time, down to Dayville. An' he'll think to wunst o' some connivin' he's ben doin' at the way ole Barnes has been a-gittin' rich out o' venshuns o' the boy's father, th't he got 'thout payin' fer. I happen to know that ole Barnes and Grout had sum tork erbout the subjeck when Barnes fetched Edward up here four year ago. If Barnes and Grout did evil—as they did—we'll make good come out on't, by holdin' over them, as a kind o' whip, our knowledge o' their wrong-doin'."

"Good for you! Is Mr. Edgerley goin' to apply for a license to preach? Elder Peters wants a new man or two."

"It's practicin' ruther'n preachin' that Tim Edgerley's doin' erbout these days, though such preachin' as Peters does is the right sort, 'lowin' Tim's a jedge o' sermons."

"By the way, Mr. Edgerley, what did you see this morning, that started your ire?"

"The ole tyrant gin the boy cuts with his ox-whip, jest because he stopped a bit to look at some white chickens that was a-dippin' their bills into a dough-dish; an' I hearn the little feller, kind o' joyful saying, 'Chicky, chicky, nice chickies!' Then came the lash o' that ox-whip, with two snappin', stingin' blows 'round the boy's legs, and he had nothin' on but a pair o' denim pants. And Grout said, 'I'll teach ye not to be wastin' precious

time. Thet's a cryin' sin, forbidden in Scriptor, and ye must be taught better than thet, livin' as ye do in the house o' one o' the foreordained and elected.' An' all the time the old Herod an' hippercrit was a-preachin' that little feller was jest a-cryin' as if his heart would break. I said nothin' 'cause I thought I'd play the purty with Grout. And I said, all smilin', right then, when I was boilin' with mad, 'Good mornin', Mr. Grout,' an' he said, 'Good mornin', Mr, Edgerley,' as perlite as you please, and there I was jest longin' to give him a blessin' that he couldn't buy tew the store. Sech dewin's ginerally make me collar the feller, but I thort I'd dew better and perhaps hurt wus. It's dewin' a man good tew stop him frum sinnin'."

"That's so."

"That's what I'd like tew dew fer Grout."

"Why, Edgerley, you're a friend of the needy and a missionary to the heathen, as well!"

"Grout a heathen—not a bad idee!"

Edgerley's plan was carried out, the first week of the haying season, which began the Monday after the Fourth. Edgerley's friendship for the boy must have counted with Grout, for he was more reasonable in his treatment of his ward, who, the next winter, found still another friend. At Edgerley's suggestion Mr. Sumner mentioned to the school committee, all of whom were members of the Hardland church, Darling's name as applicant for the centre school to teach, and told not only his qualifications

as teacher but his "good and regular standing" with the regulation religionists. Darling's application was received with favor by the whole board, not one of whom saw that Edgerley had a hand in the matter. When learning of this interest, they did not think he had other object than securing a place for his cousin; certainly they did not think he sought a teacher for the school who would be friendly to the New Light orphan boy. Supplemented by a bit of shrewdness by Darling the plan worked better than was hoped, and not only did the committee, after a brief examination, "approve Lewis Darling to teach the school at Hardland centre for the winter term of 1854-5," but their certificate of approval bore the indorsement of Rev. Abimilech Barrett, who had been invited to "sit with the committee," and who testified that he found "the bearer, Lewis Darling, sound on the decrees and minor points of doctrine."

"Decrees an' minor p'int's," said Edgerley after the examination—"well, Lew, ain't that good? Haow'd ye work it, Lew?"

"Why, Tim, you see, Mr. Barrett, as you may have heard, has a daughter Huldah that he's been trying to get married off. I was invited to dinner at the parsonage, and, of course, I was polite to Miss Barrett—politeness, and that was all that was shown by a man pledged to Mary Ronald. At the examination I showed the certificate from the minister up home, and daughter and document did the business! The committee, who had evi-

dently been 'given the wink' by Mr. Barrett, asked me but few questions and those that any child could answer, and ten minutes after the hearing began the examiners made out their certificate, on which Mr. Barrett indorsed his approval of your cousin, theologically considered!"

"I say, Lew, you're jest sum punkins an' a hull team an' a hoss tew let!" And the compliment was emphasized with a friendly slap on the shoulder that made the dust fly even from the neatly dressed Darling, as Edgerley concluded his eulogy with, "Jest think o' Jennie and Mary larfin' over what they'll hear erbout this fun, ez quick ez the stage can dror a letter frum Tim Edgerley up tew Noo Hampshear!"

It had been the rule with the Hardland centre school to "put the master out" every other winter, and this was the season for the ejection, when, of course, the boys would do their best to keep up their good record for prowess. But Mr. Darling, by his vigorous handling of two of the "big boys" for acts indicating the incipient stages of a rebellion, prevented its culmination and so fully demonstrated his ability to "govern the school," that the committee were more than ever pleased with their choice; while Rev. Mr. Barrett, who still "had hopes for Huldah," as Edgerley wrote in his second letter to his "Jennie in Noo Hampshear," was unctious in praise of "the excellent master of our head school," and continued to vouch for him as fit for welcome in that aristocracy of theological

correctness, "the foreordained and elected." Thus entrenched in the good will of these educational and ecclesiastical authorities, Master Darling, whose natural politeness counted well with the women of the district, soon had a hold on his position as teacher which not even punishing a child of one of the foreordained and punishing him for an offense against the child of a reprobate, could jeopardize. The New Light boy, because of the theological stigma on his parentage was thought to have "no rights that the *foreordained and elected* were bound to respect." And Deacon Grout's son thought that, although Mr. Darling had made hazing "off color" that year, it would do for the son of the deacon to practice it, and, certainly, to practice it on the son of unelected parents. But, fearing interference in behalf of fair play, if he assaulted Edward, he induced another boy to give the "licking," which, with its supplementary "rubbing" in the snow, was the depth of humiliation. On reëntering the school-room, the offender was called to the floor and given a "dose of birch tonic," at the completion of which the teacher, who gave no hint that he surmised there was another offender, seized the young Grout by the collar, and, pulling him to the floor, demanded in a stern voice :—

"Do you understand Latin?"

"N'—n'—n' no, sir".

"I propose to teach the meaning of one Latin saying so you'll not forget it, if you live to be as old as Methuselah !

You, sir, led the other boy to inflict indignities on Edward, and that's the same as if you did the act yourself; and now ——”

“I w'—w'—won't do so no more!”

“I think you will not. The saying well fits the offense. And,” continued the indignant master, as he took from an inner pocket of his coat a raw hide and began belaboring the Grout, “you deserve a blow for every letter in the maxim, but I'll use only three words, ‘Q-u-i f-a-c-i-t p-e-r.’”

“There, sir,” concluded Darling, “‘*Qui facit per alium, facit per se,*’ He who by another does a thing, himself does it—and in this school shall be held responsible for it! Do you understand?”

“Y'—y'—yis, sir.”

“Down on your knees, sir. And Edward, you come here and let this Grout beg your pardon.”

“I'd rather not, if you please, Mr. Darling, but I'll forgive him.”

“All right, my noble fellow; that's forgiving your enemies, surely. And now, Grout, you beg my pardon for the offense and the pardon of the boy you led into the wrong doing for which he was punished.”

“Y'—y'—y'—yis sir,” sniveled the kneeling culprit.

“Go to your seat! and behave yourself here and do not molest Edward in or out of school.”

This punishment insured Atherton's safety through the term; but, when, in the spring, Darling went to Wayfield

to teach a "select school," and Edgerley, by death in his father's family, was called home to remain until June, the boy was made to endure hardness enough to pay, cent per cent, for all the previous amelioration of his lot. Returning to Hardland the day before the drive of Elder Peters and Stedman on their mission, Edgerley was with Mr. Sumner, in a field, as the Dayville team drove up.

CHAPTER XV.

RESCUE.

ELDER PETERS, how do ——” but the salutation of Mr. Sumner was unanswered, and Peters, listening, said :—

“ Brother Stedman—that sound—do you hear it ? blows, and some one sobbing ? Quick, Stedman ! Sumner will care for the horse.” And minister and Stedman hastened on tip-toe toward Deacon Grout’s barn, whence came the sounds.

“ In there !—stable door — barn floor — I’ll — this way through back barn doors,” said the flying Peters. Inside the stable, Stedman saw Grout on the barn floor, whip in hand, uplifted above the prostrate form of a boy with hands tied, and heard, “ There ! reprobate, will you mind now ? ” and faintly came the moaned reply, “ I didn’t do wrong ; I didn’t take them.” Then the gruff voice, “ You did—and now lying like Annynyus and Soffyrya, thet wuz struck ded by the jedgment of God. I’ll —— ” and the blow was about to fall that might kill or drive to madness, when forward sprang the great Stedman, and thundered his voice :—“ Monster ! Hold ! ”

A hay-fork quickly seized by Grout struck the plunging man in his right cheek. Pulling the tine from the wound, Stedman, heeding not the flowing blood, grappled Grout,

and the two fell to the floor, Grout above Stedman and clutching his throat to cause almost the faintness of death. Peters, baffled in trying to open the rear doors, rushed back to the stable, and at one bound, as if suddenly re-informed with the fire of his athletic youth, cleared the whole distance to Grout, who, rising from the murderous clutch at the throat of Stedman, soon found himself ten feet from where the itinerant grasped him and lying, back down, on the floor, with Peters kneeling on his breast, but not engaged in prayer!

"I'll not harm you, sir," said the minister, "and you ought to be grateful that I came in season to prevent you killing Stedman and that he came in time to prevent you crushing to insanity that one of God's children who was committed to your keeping. Look at him; see, sir, what you have done to one of the little ones who is especially dear to the Heavenly Father! Hear the moans of the boy. Did you ever read the curse recorded in the sacred Book against such as you—the millstone and the depths of the sea? What! no sign of compunctions when you ought to cry to God for mercy!"

Elder Peters, who, as he began the "exhortation," knelt at the side of his "hearer" but still kept a firm hold on him, now arose, as did Grout, who said:—

"I have a right to whip the boy, because he's bound to me. He is not one of the elect, but is a reprobate, and has stolen from one of the elect and then lied about it, like Annynus and Soffyrya."

“Stolen from one of the elect!” exclaimed Mr. Sumner, as he, with Edgerley, appeared on the scene, “what has he stolen?”

“A peck measure full of last year’s apples, the last I had.”

“Stolen apples! you ought to have suspected your own son; for, while you have called him one of those elected to heaven he has been going to the devil! I saw him in the road with the measure of apples, munching one of them, giving some of them to his mates and chuckling over the fact that ‘Dad would think that Ed stole the apples an’ give him the gol blastedest lickin’ he ever got.’”

Sumner left Grout and knelt by the boy, untied his hands, and for a time listened to the whispered wanderings of a mind worn by the dominance of an overpowering will and insane from fright. Edgerley, laying on Grout’s shoulder a hand that could have shaken him as if he were but a plaything, said:—

“If you’d hurt Edward only half as bad as you have, I sh’d a’ gin you a whalin’, as a means o’ grace, but now you’re beyond the power o’ grace to save, an’ I pity ye, for if thar’s a hell, Dave Grout has ahead o’ him that which none o’ the preachers can foreshadder, the dreddin’ o’ which must be wusser a thousand times nor anythin’ Tim Edgerley kin dew tew a feller, an’ the realizin’ o’ which no folks kin tell what live in the kentry this side of the dark river! Yis, Dave Grout, I pity ye, I dew!” And the mild blue eyes of the giant, that contrasted strangely

with his great form, filled with tears and his face was ashv pale as he turned, shuddering, from the cruel man and repeated, "Yis, Dave Grout, I pity ye, I dew!"

"You reprobate, why are you talking to one of God's elect about hell?" said Grout.

"Dave Grout, I pity ye, yis I dew;" and the giant as he neared Grout's victim, knelt and laid his heavy hand tenderly on the sufferer's shoulder, saying, "Tim Edgerley loves ye."

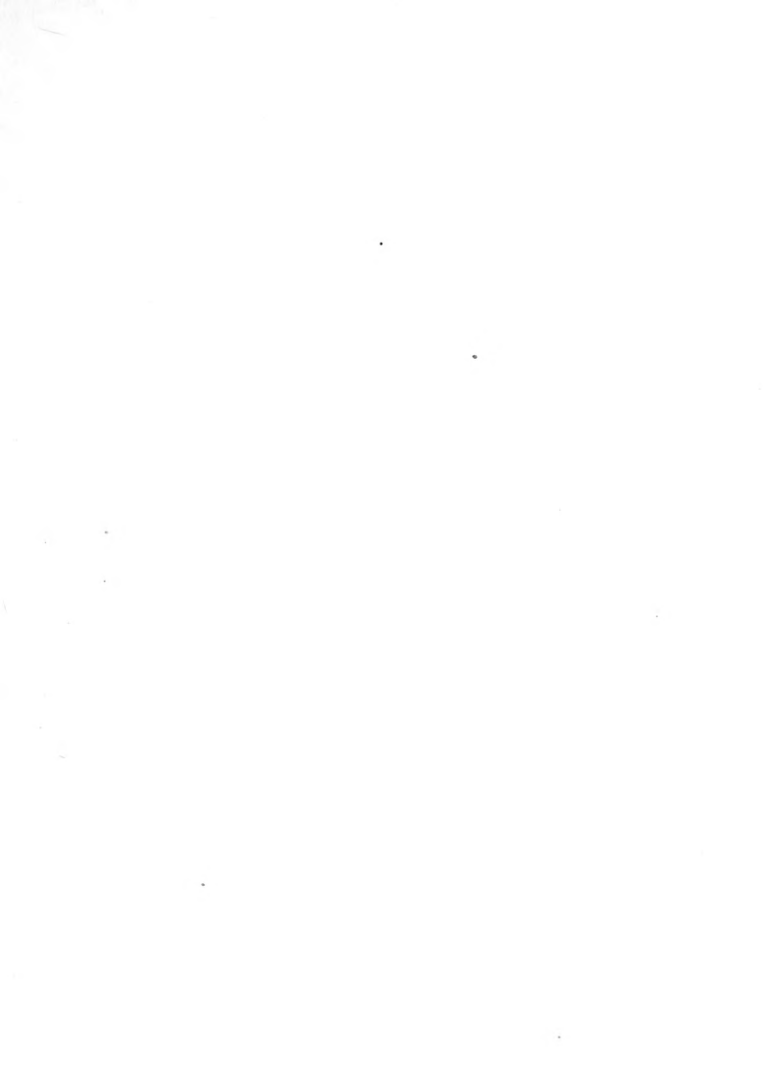
"Mr. Sumner," said Peters in tones indicating arousement for action and the consciousness of ability to do what was necessary to be done, "if Mr. Edgerley will assist Stedman to his feet and walk with him to your house, you and I will carry Edward there, and I presume Mrs. Sumner will make up a couch for him and another for the wounded man. And," continued he on the way to house, "you have a horse—it is twenty miles—tell Dr. Johnson all that has happened and say that he's wanted."

"All right, Brother Peters, 'Dan' will take me there in just two hours."

In an hour and fifty minutes from receiving the errand, Mr. Sumner halted his "Dan" at the house of Dr. Johnson of Dayville. In five minutes the physician, supplied with medicines, instruments and restoratives, was whirling on his way towards Hardland, where, in an hour and forty minutes his lithe, black "Flyer," white with foam, was reined down from a keen run in front of the house of Mr. Sumner. Watching the boy intently for

a time, the doctor said as he took his hand from the pulse of the sufferer, "One more blow, and his reason would have been gone forever ! But now there is hope."

"Thank God, Dr. Johnson," said Elder Peters, "Brother Stedman and I followed the leadings of the Spirit, and were just in time. I shall never forget—'One more blow and his reason would have been gone forever !' "







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